CRITICISM

a quarterly for literature and the arts

articles by

FRITZ BOSE ON THE MEANING OF MUSIC

Leroy W. SMITH ON FIELDING AND MANDEVILLE:
THE "WAR AGAINST VIRTUE"

SELMA JEANNE COHEN ON AVANT-GARDE CHORE-OGRAPHY

HERBERT McARTHUR ON TRAGIC AND COMIC MODES

PAUL MINER ON WILLIAM BLAKE'S "DIVINE ANALOGY"

Reviews by Hyatt H. Waggoner, Alex Page, T. C. Rumble, Walter F. Staton, Jr., and George Ross Ridge

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The Meaning of Music

Music is commonly seen as a means of communication among people, a kind of literature without the limitations of language, a language without phonemes. People refer to music as a "language of the heart" or as a "universal language." These expressions indicate that people assume that music contains certain universal values, certain feelings perhaps, which are perceived equally by all listeners. On the basis of this assumption (which, we shall see, is erroneous), music has been construed as a universal means of communication beyond language,

an Esperanto of the soul.

Equally questionable is the frequently repeated notion that music is derived from language. We will never know whether humanity first learned to speak or to sing, and we can only draw conclusions from ontogenetic study of this problem. The babbling of infants is neither speech nor music but the point of departure for both. But as soon as a child begins to change from this babbling to articulated speech, it also begins learning to sing and to reproduce rhythmic sounds. Surely speech and music are related in their structure, but in function they are completely different modes of expression. They seem to appear simultaneously in the individual's development as soon as the vocal organs are able to produce them. This is true in spite of the fact that the ability to make speech-sounds is irrelevant to the ability to sing, just as the ability to sustain a tone at a given single pitch level is irrelevant to speaking ability. The purpose of speech is the transmission of concrete thoughts; that of singing, the realization of an artistic impulse. Speech is a function of the desire to communicate; singing, of the expression of emotion. Singing is conceivable even without the intention of communication; one can sing with meaningless syllables, and one can appreciate song without understanding the words.

This article was translated from the German by Bruno Nettl.

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To be sure, song usually makes use of speech, but speech is neither the essential nor the primary force. Rather, it is emotion which drives man to sing and make music. Certain patterns of his emotional life may stimulate him to musical activity; and, in turn, hearing music arouses emotional reactions in him. These components of musical experience are present in all cultures; they are recognized even by primitive people and are used in the cultic and ceremonial structures of these tribes. Music can stimulate and guide man's soul. The movements of the spirit which music can express have been treated by the philosophers of ancient China, Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and through the modern age in which medicine and psychology have taken an experimental interest in them. Many peoples and races have made practical use of the stimulating and

narcotic qualities of music in their medicine ceremonies.

This spiritual aspect is an important factor in musical experience, but it is neither the only nor the foremost one. Conscious perception and conscious creation can recognize only those musical structures which can be grasped intellectually. What constitutes the emotional effects of music, which combinations of tones and which rhythmic types can elicit certain specific emotional reactions, has always been the subject of theoretical and psychological speculation. Recently, again, an attempt was made to set up a catalog of musical formulae and their corresponding emotional values.1 But such attempts are always in vain, for they are inevitably tied in with short periods and limited geographic areas if they have any validity. Musical symbols never have universal meaning and usually have only a short life-span. Moreover, the expressive power of musical forms is relatively uncertain. If this were not so, it would not be possible to combine a melody with several unrelated texts or to transfer music motifs, themes, or entire compositions from one setting to another-from the sacred to the secular, for example. The emotional content of a culture can be grasped only with difficulty by a chronologically or geographically distant listener.

It must be pointed out also that this expressive content of music is essentially independent of language. It is an integral part of the music itself, affecting the spirit of the composer or performer, and it is imparted to the listener provided that he understands the symbols through which emotions are expressed in music. This expressive content can be strengthened through the words which may be sung, or through a "program" or other explanations on the part of the com-

¹ Deryck Cooke, The Language of Music (London, Oxford University Press, 1959).

poser, but it exists without these. And it exists in every kind of musical expression, even where it is not intended to be present, and even contrary to a composer's desire. However, it is by no means music's primary duty to express emotion, nor is it the decisive one. There is music which contains and stimulates few emotions and there is music which is charged with a great deal of emotional content. Within the limits of a style and even within a single work of music there is great variety in the amount of emotional content. Thus in a Gregorian mass long sections of non-emotional recitation may alternate with sections of a high degree of emotional content. The structure of the music is also irrelevant here. A fugue, an aria, or a sonata can be emotionally "dry" or, with the use of different thematic material, full of emotion-stirring power. The "Well-Tempered Clavichord" and the "Art of the Fugue" contain examples of both kinds of material.

The expressive values of music and their relative strengths are extremely difficult to analyze. They withhold themselves from intellectual perception and definition, for they spring from deeper segments of spiritual consciousness and communicate only with these. These expressive values do not communicate concrete ideas and are, then, no real means of communication. They move from individual to individual, but their content is limited to intellectually imperceptible and partially subconscious levels. Thus a comparison of music and language indicates fewer similarities than might be expected. Music as expression, as a carrier of the spiritual, is only in a limited sense a "language of the heart," certainly not in a general sense but only in varying degrees for different individuals. Each person understands this "language" within the limits of his own style and culture alone, and not all understand it equally well; some don't understand it at all.

Music does not express feelings only. It can also communicate ideas and forms—but again not in the sense of specific communication or independent of any accompanying program or verbal text. In contrast to the deeper aspects of musical perception, in which moods and feelings are transmitted, the upper strata appeal more to the intellectual powers of the listener, making it possible for him to perceive the structure of the music and the details of its performance in parts and as a whole. This level of perception is again limited by the listener's culture and is of no greater general significance than the lower, emotional level. Being a function of the intellect, it presupposes experience and knowledge. Intellectual perception of music requires a level of musical education or talent, while emotional perception of music requires only

the ability to have one's emotions stimulated. Each function can exist without the other.

Perceiving these spiritual and structural aspects of music involves not only the purely formal building-blocks of music, not only the specifically musical: since music is something which people experience, it expresses something about those who experience it, something which is not itself musical. It is the essential ideology of the culture whose music is involved—that is, of the cultural background and environment of the music. This ideology is latent in the music, but it is not itself music, but rather a spiritual manifestation of the creator of the music and of his culture.

These intellectual aspects of music, like the emotional ones, are analogous to the corresponding aspects in the other arts. In contrast to the emotional aspects, which are difficult to define, the intellectual ones are capable of verbal formulation; thus they come closer to having the character of communications, although here too only very general and unspecified thoughts are transmitted. No specific matters are communicated, only complexes of ideas and thoughts. In a work by Palestrina, the listener is presented with some aspects of the composer's personality (a mood which is present in all of Palestrina's works), but also with something of the mental culture of Palestrina's period (which this work would have in common with all works of that period). The style of an individual composer or period is based on the way in which the technical means of music are used, and can be defined by a description of these means. But these technical means are not central. Rather, it is essential to note that certain ideas and attitudes were responsible for the selection of a particular technique. And these ideas, in the Renaissance for example, did not motivate only Palestrina and his musical contemporaries, but also artists, scholars, politicians, pedagogues, etc. in the formulation of thoughts with similar content. The ideas expressed by the musicians, painters, poets, and philosophers of the Renaissance are essentially the same as those which are found, objectively formulated, in writings, memoirs, sermons, laws, and treatises of the period. These ideas motivated all thoughts and deeds of the period: the changed relationship between God and man, the emancipation of thought from scholastic dogmatism, the freeing of the spirit from the aegis of theology, the discovery of many horizons. These ideas are also perceptible in the music of the Renaissance; they determine the technical means and their use. And if they are not communicated to us, if they do not inform us about the "Zeitgeist"

of their period, this is our own fault, because we are conditioned to a different environment and can perceive them only intuitively. To understand these ideas is a privilege of the educated; but for Renaissance man it was not. For him, these ideas were immediate and self-evident, just as much music of the 20th century is to us. Renaissance music contained his thoughts and ideas even when he did not wish them contained there.

Those who cannot respect or love the art-forms of their own period still show that they have understood them. We are moved not only by what we enjoy but also by that which angers us. In all periods the spiritual currents found both acceptance and opposition—in politics, science, art, and everyday life. For ideas are not ideals, and a builder must also be a destroyer. Revolutions, after all, are always violent. The epoch of "Sturm und Drang" is not only the period of bourgeois ideals: it did not produce gems alone, such as "Werther," "Götz," or "Die Räuber"; it also spawned the questionable works of the Marquis de Sade. It not only gave birth to the sonata and the symphony, it also relegated to obscurity the work of Bach.

The styles of the periods are manifested in form-types and techniques. They exist only as long as the ideas which bore them are in existence. The period of the sonata and the symphony coincides exactly with the period of liberalism and of specifically bourgeois culture. This could be mere coincidence if there were not other accompanying factors, and analogies with other periods like that of absolutism for instance, which was accompanied by the techniques of monody and figured bass. There must be a causal relationship. The styles of art are the realizations of the spiritual strivings of the historical eras.

Thus we have the right to search for personal and national ideologies in the structural elements of music and in their changes. These ideologies are imparted to us as we accustom ourselves to the styles of the musics which represent them. In the case of exotic cultures this can only be the case if the music is presented as authentically and with as genuine a cultural environment as possible. Javanese Wadjang music can impart to us something beyond the merely formal, something about Javanese man and culture, only if it is presented in its original form, without arrangement, and with a knowledge on the part of the Western listener of the words which are sung and of the cultural background of the music (the Wadjang shadow play, in this case). A melody of Rambaut de Vaquerias arranged for piano can give little of an idea of the troubadours' culture. We must reconstruct such music

with the sound ideals of their time of origin if we are to feel, through it, anything of the period's ideology. And even then our perception will be limited.

Musical experience is a complex process which concerns several levels of our consciousness, the spiritual as well as the intellectual spheres. Music is equally an expression of emotion and of mind: the whole man takes part in musical perception. Music as expression is directed toward the emotions, music as communication toward the mind. Music possesses expressive and communicative values of itself, without literary additives. These values are manifested through the sounds and forms of the art, but they are not identical with these. Expression of emotions and communication of ideas are the perceptible and constructive powers of personality and of "Zeitgeist."

Fielding and Mandeville: The "War Against Virtue"

Studies of Henry Fielding, which amply develop his ties with the Latitudinarian divines and the benevolists, link him only indirectly with those writers who believed that the selfish passions control man's actions.¹ But the latter group—variously called skeptics, anti-rationalists, or self-love psychologists and headed by Hobbes, Bayle, and Mandeville—strongly and directly influenced Fielding's thought.² To unfold

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¹ For the influence of the Latitudinarians see James A. Work, "Henry Fielding, Christian Censor," *The Age of Johnson*, ed. F. W. Hilles (New Haven, 1949), pp. 138-48; and A. R. Towers, unpub. diss. (Princeton, 1953), "An Introduction and Annotations for a Critical Edition of *Amelia*," Chap. III. The influence of Shaftesbury is a commonplace of criticism of Fielding. See, for example, Wilbur Cross, *The History of Henry Fielding* (New Haven, 1918), II, 212; and Homes Dudden, *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times* (Oxford, 1952), II, 679.

² The catalog of Fielding's library testifies to his interest in the debate over self-love and benevolence and to his acquaintance with the men who preached man's egoism. Of the works of the skeptics or anti-rationalists Fielding possessed Montaigne's Essays, Pascal's Pensées sur la Religion, Spinoza's Opera Posthuma, Malebranche's De la Recherche de la Vérité, Esprit's La Fausseté des Vertus Humaines, Bayle's Dictionaire Historique & Critique, and Hume's Philosophical Essays on Human Understanding. No copies of the works of Hobbes or Mandeville appear, but among the work of their opponents he held "Pusendorf's" Law of Nature and Nations (presumably a translation of Samuel Pufendorf's De Jure Naturae et Gentium), Richard Cumberland's Treatise of the Laws of Nature, Shaftesbury's Characteristics, and Philip Skelton's Deism Revealed. He also owned the works of many clergymen who criticized Hobbes's psychology of human nature, including Ralph Cudworth's The True Intellectual System of the Universe, Isaac Barrow's Works, Samuel Clarke's Works, Robert South's Sermons, and John Tillotson's Works. In addition, at least twenty-two references to the skeptical writers appear in Fielding's works: three to Hobbes, five and possibly six or seven to Bayle, two to Mandeville, one to La Rochefoucauld, one to the French skeptics in general, and at least nine as part of serious commentaries on the nature of man and on the social scene.

and establish this influence will clarify the nature of Fielding's indebtedness to participants in the contemporary debate over the nature of man and his fitness for society. It will also disclose how Fielding resolved a personal intellectual problem: the conflict between an optimistic view of human nature and a pessimistic view of the nature of society.

Hobbes's influence is suggested by Fielding's frequent use of his beliefs both ironically and seriously.³ Bayle's influence, from the number of specific references and the remarkable coincidence of ideas, is even more direct and pervasive.⁴ But one finds the best evidence of Fielding's affinity with the skeptical writers, and of his resolution of the conflict in his views of individual man and of society as well, by comparing the ways in which he and Mandeville analyzed and prescribed for man and society.

Fielding cites Mandeville twice by name. While posing as a self-styled hypocrite named Iago, whose views resemble Mandeville's, he refers to him as "that very wise Writer Dr. Mandevil." ⁵ Again, early in *Amelia* (III, v) he distinguishes Booth's theory of the primacy of the passions, the source of most of his difficulties, from Mandeville's. Mandeville is clearly one of the group of skeptics and anti-rationalists whom Fielding attacks as "political philosophers," men who ridicule

*Fielding adopts the Hobbesian point of view for ironic purposes in "A Modern Glossary" (Covent-Garden Journal, Jan. 14, 1752) and in An Essay on Nothing (The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., ed. W. E. Henley [London, 1903], XIV, 318). Unless otherwise noted all references to Fielding's works, except periodicals and novels, will list volume and page number in the Henley edition, hereafter cited as Works. Fielding seriously uses several ideas associated with Hobbes: his definition that good-humor (as distinguished from good-nature) arises from pride (An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men, XIV, 285-86); his description of the state of nature and its origins (A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor [London, 1753], p. 5; Jacobite's Journal, Mar. 19, 1748; Champion, Jan. 22, 1739/40); and his defense of society as beneficial because it renders its members inoffensive to one another (An Essay on Conversation, XIV, 247). Fielding's fullest use of Hobbes's ideas occurs in Jonathan Wild. In the portrait of Wild one recognizes the natural man of Hobbes who corresponds to the great man described by the popular moralists.

*Fielding's ideas on human nature, society, and the nature of things are often close enough to Bayle's, both in general character and in specific content, to suggest Bayle as a source for Fielding's skepticism. For a complete discussion of these correspondences in thought see my unpub. diss. (Duke, 1956), "The Doctrine of the Passions as It Appears in the Works of Henry Fielding, Particularly

in Amelia," Chap. III.

⁶ Covent-Garden Journal, Mar. 14, 1752. The pun on "Mandevil" is clearly intentional and reflects a familiar ironic play on Mandeville's name.

man's hope of future reward, who "War against Virtue," who deny the existence of love, and who include among them those who call vices "the chief benefits to a Nation." ⁶

By design or accident Fielding also makes frequent use of ideas associated with Mandeville. For example, in the Champion (Dec. 1, 1739), the reasons for Afterwit's inability to adhere to principles-the failure of reason, the selfishness of man, a skeptical attitude toward immortality, and a belief that moral and religious restraints are shackles made by politicians and priests-are also prominent among Mandeville's theories. Occasionally Fielding uses a character who reflects Mandeville's interpretation of human nature and of society,7 and his apostrophe to vanity in Joseph Andrews (I, xv) resembles Mandeville's celebration of that passion. The basis for Fielding's satire on the great man in Jonathan Wild is anticipated by Mandeville: "There is no Station of Life, where Pride, Emulation, and the Love of Glory may not be displayed. . . . Rogues have the same Passions to gratify as other Men, and value themselves on their Honour and Faithfulness to one another, their Courage, Intrepidity, and other manly Virtues, as well as People of better Professions. . . . " 8 In the pattern of his behavior and in his ultimate realization of the value of prudence Tom Jones brings to life Mandeville's portrait of the ideal companion (Fable, I, 338-339). Finally, in the Convent-Garden Journal Mandeville's beliefs are reflected indirectly in the definitions in the "Modern Glossary" (Jan. 14, 1752); in the description of the value placed upon dress in estimating one's worth (Apr. 25); in the ironic discussion of the folly of placing skeptical writings in the hands of children by wrapping tarts in the leaves of books (Jan. 21); and in the ridicule of the Robinhood Society, whose members, like Mandeville, defended religion because it sanctifies oaths and protects property (Jan. 28 and Feb. 8). Contrasting attitudes guide Fielding's use of these references: ridicule (e.g., the Robinhoodians) and apparent agreement.

The ideas of Fielding and Mandeville often are strikingly alike, one reason being that a practical interest in what constitutes man's happi-

⁶ The references appear in the Champion, Dec. 11, 1739; Jan. 22 and 24, 1739/40; Joseph Andrews, II, xiii; "Preface" to the Miscellanies, XII, 242-43; Essay on Conversation, XIV, 245; True Patriot, Nov. 26, 1745 and Feb. 25, 1746; and Tom Jones, VI, i.

⁷ Champion, Dec. 11, 1739; Jan. 26 and 29, 1739/40; True Patriot, Jan. 14 and May 13, 1746.

^{*}The Fable of the Bees, ed. F. B. Kaye (Oxford, 1924), I, 275 (hereafter referred to as Fable).

ness rather than abstract principles of right and wrong guides both men. How to make the social structure function smoothly and, with certain inevitable limitations, for the benefit of all is the goal each pursues. As evidence that their aim is essentially "political" rather than "moral," they do not seek to end the follies of the rich, even suggesting that society benefits from luxury, but strive to prevent the working poor from imitating their betters. The former harm only themselves; the latter, in emulating the rich, harm society. Both Fielding and Mandeville tend also to praise religion for its utility: although Fielding was a Low Church Anglican, whereas Mandeville seemed to lack serious religious feeling or idealism (Fable, I, liv), each points out the practical and worldly benefits of religion.

Like Mandeville and other anti-rationalists, Fielding found that the "rigorism" implied in the common theological view of morality and of conduct (that virtue was a transcending of the demands of corrupt nature) and in the rationalistic view (that virtue was conduct in accord with sheer reason) was incompatible with the true state of man and with a correct psychology.9 In Tom Jones Fielding attacked these two attitudes in the characters of Thwackum and Square, whose views resemble those which Mandeville exploited to produce his famous paradox: "Private Vices, Publick Benefits." Fielding blamed the Thwackums of his day for representing virtue as so rigid in nature and so difficult to attain that they frightened weaker men from her pursuit and opened the way for those, like Hobbes and Mandeville, who claimed that "Vice, to every wise Man, was infinitely preferable to Virtue" (Champion, Jan. 24, 1739/40). Fielding also was tolerant of imperfect man and scornful of the zealous hypocrite. He objected to the rigorist's notion that man could not be happy and good at the same time. Quoting his favorite, Dr. Barrow, he inquires why the passion of benevolence can not repay us with herself as well as any other passion (Covent-Garden Journal, Apr. 11, 1752).

^o Kaye uses the term "rigorism" to describe the "blend of asceticism and rationalism in Mandeville's definition" of virtue: only those acts are virtuous "by which Man, contrary to the impulse of Nature, should endeavour the Benefit of others, or the Conquest of his own Passions out of a Rational Ambition of being good" (Fable, I, 48-49). Applying the formula, Mandeville could find no action "dictated entirely by reason and quite free from selfishness" (I, xlvii-xlviii). Almost all of Mandeville's rigorist opponents were forced in rebuttal to approach the utilitarian viewpoint (I, cxxviii). The benevolists too (Mandeville used Shaftesbury as a sort of "horrid example" of what he disagreed with [I, lxxii]) were hard put to defend their theory of the fundamental benevolence of man.

A characteristic of the skepticism common to both writers is a recognition of the disparity between man as he is by nature and as he wishes to appear—the age-old problem of appearance and reality. One cause of the problem, they agree, is that some men wish to gratify their selfish passions at the expense of others and to disguise their actions to deceive their victims. A second cause is the rigoristic doctrine that actions involving the emotions are vicious, a concept which leads men to disguise such actions in order to appear virtuous, even when they are not. Because he fears for the good man caught in a world in which the passions prevail, Fielding wishes to expose the hypocrisy of those who attempt to deceive their victims. Because he believes that rigorism is unrealistic, Mandeville desires to expose the hypocrisy that frequently results from it.

Mandeville believed, of course, that the passions are selfish in nature and control man's behavior. Although Fielding believed that man possesses generous passions as well as selfish ones, he recognizes the unceasing, instinctive urge for domination of the latter. The analyses by Mandeville and Fielding of honor and charity illustrate their conviction that the selfish emotions largely control social behavior. The differences in their views are due to Fielding's assumption that man possesses virtuous as well as vicious passions. The concept of honor which Mandeville describes Fielding finds widespread but attacks as false honor. He contrasts this popular concept, the product of an undue regard for the good opinion of others, prompted by pride and shame, with true honor, typified by good-nature and humanity. The two men agree that false honor springs from unflattering sources, that it opposes true virtue, and that, along with duelling, it is counter to Christian principles. As for charity, since Mandeville assumes that man acts according to the will of the selfish passions, he believes that the exercise of charity is a sham. Self-love prompts men to imitate charity so that they may walk easy. As in the case of honor, Fielding perceives two types of charity. The first, false charity, based on the passions and most commonly encountered in the world, corresponds to Mandeville's "sham" charity. The concept which Mandeville presents as only an ideal corresponds to Fielding's conception of good charity. They agree on the real motives behind false charity and on the limitations to place on the use of charity; they disagree on whether true charity can be practiced.

In spite of Fielding's opposition to Mandeville their analyses of society are closely akin. They agree that the needs of nature are simple and that most of man's wants stem from education and habit. But because they disagree about the passions found in man, they ascribe man's inclination for society to different motives. Mandeville traces it to self-love and attributes the rise of society to man's imperfections. Fielding traces it to the passions of benevolence and love: man requires society to relieve his needs; it is his natural state. Because of the benefits of trade each favors a commercial society. They scorn the vices of the upper class, describe those of the lower class as no worse, perhaps less so, and suggest that the condition of the upper class is not really preferable to that of the lower class. Chiefly they criticize the upper class as an unsuitable model for other classes. Fielding, of course, believes that happiness is unrelated to social position.

Both writers agree that the control of man by the passions causes social and economic disorder and they describe the world as hypocritical, corrupt, and licentious. They tend to accept certain evils as virtually incurable. Mandeville assumes man's nature to be corrupt and argues for an honest appraisal and a realistic acceptance. He does not encourage men to be vicious; he says simply that societies cannot be raised to wealth and power without vices (Fable, I, 185, 231, 369). The theme of the corruption of society appears throughout Fielding's works: "Bad habits in the body politic, especially if of any duration, are seldom to be wholly eradicated," he writes in An Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers (XIII, 23). He fears that the corrupt elements in man will triumph permanently over the good, or that corrupt society will trap and smother the few who have maintained a proper balance within their natures. He attempts to show how these few may escape.

The luxury of society, Fielding and Mandeville agree, is both a source and a product of corruption. Mandeville defends luxury as one of the foundations of a great nation, the other being the vice that man employs to secure his desires (Fable, I, 107-23, 116, 185). Fielding recognizes the inevitable growth of luxury in a trading nation (Increase of Robbers, XIII, 14), but its effect is the deprivation of all virtue (True Patriot, Dec. 17, 1745). From the luxury of the vulgar rise expensive diversions, drunkenness, and gaming. He recognizes, however, that to end the prevailing luxury by a general prohibition is both inadvisable and impossible; palliatives alone can be applied (Increase of Robbers, XIII, 21-44).

Although many of their observations were strikingly similar, Fielding refused to be led by Mandeville's evidence and logic to embrace his theories. In discovering the nature and source of the difference in their

attitudes one also discovers how Fielding reconciled his optimistic view of human nature with the discouraging evidence of human iniquity.

Mandeville's thesis was that "the Necessities, the Vices and Imperfections of Man, together with the various Inclemencies of the Air and other Elements, contain in them the Seeds of all Arts, Industry and Labour" (Fable, I, 366). What most men want cannot be attained "without Avarice, Profuseness, Pride, Envy, Ambition and other Vices" (II, 106). His defense of the evils of society is the source of much misunderstanding. Not only was he a whimsical writer, as Kaye says (I, lxviii), but he also desired to confound the proponents of a rigoristic system of ethics. He was a moral realist wishing to expose the human animal's pretensions to virtue. He hoped that the fault-finders would be moved to examine their own faults and that those who benefit from a great and flourishing nation would submit more patiently to the necessary inconveniences (I, 7-8).

Mandeville's analysis of human nature prevented him from accepting any system which professed to control the passions or to legislate them out of existence. Because of the frailty and inconstancy of man's resolves and behavior (Fable, I, 167-68), the pulchrum et honestum of things varied with modes and customs (I, 343) and no absolute rules of morality could be imposed upon man. Furthermore, Mandeville defended his society as the most satisfactory arrangement that man could expect, and he defended himself against the charge of encouraging lawlessness by insisting on laws and regulations to keep man's vices and luxury within bounds (I, 10, 37). He would prefer "a small peaceable Society" (I, 13), but since such is not to be had he desires to regulate the great and bustling hive of men in the best interests of all (I, 248-49).

Since Fielding attributes social and economic disorders to the rule of undisciplined passions, he explains the state of society much as Mandeville does. This analysis reveals most clearly his affinity with the skeptics and self-love psychologists. But, unlike Mandeville, he refuses to accept such a society as inevitable or, from the pragmatist's view, as generally satisfactory. He recoils even more strongly from accepting Mandeville's analysis of individual psychology.

Fielding presents two programs: one to preserve the good man from the temptations and entrapments of the world and the other to ameliorate the worst evils of society. On the basis of the benevolist's idea that elements of potential good exist in every man he constructs his program to save the good man. He builds his three long novels around him in the characters of Joseph, Tom, and Booth. But Fielding's attitude toward man in general resembles that of the skeptics, and his program to regulate society, presented primarily in his pamphlets on social reform, reflects their influence. This ambivalent attitude explains the apparent discrepancy between Fielding's insistence on the possibility of goodness and virtue in the lowly-placed man and his repressive attitude toward the lower classes in the social reform pamphlets.

The rescue of the good man depends on his having those qualities that Mandeville does not accept—the good passions, benevolence, love, friendship. They form the basis for the values associated with the Christian religion. The conflict of these values with those of the man ruled by selfish passions, a familiar topic in Fielding's age, is illustrated by Fielding's distinction between greatness and goodness ("Preface" to the *Miscellanies*, XII, 245-46).¹⁰ In the values derived from benevolence and love and encouraged by the Christian religion Fielding believes that man will find the answer to the primary quest of his life, the pursuit of happiness.¹¹

Fielding's other program, designed to ameliorate the major ills of society, reflects his conviction that the ignoble passions guide the actions of most men. He doubts that the majority of men can contribute helpfully to their own government, and in planning for the regulation of society he recommends a program offering little encouragement to any spark of goodness in men of the lower classes. In this latter case he is legislating for the welfare of all men, his desire to provide the most effective regulation of imperfect man apparently

governing his thought.

The core of Fielding's corrective program is found in his argument that men are made for society. That society will be nearest perfect, Fielding believes, that fits its members to the offices alloted them by nature. For only when the machine is rightly made, when all members are in their proper places, can it perform its functions smoothly. Since talents are distributed according to their usefulness in society, the

¹¹ Champion, Jan. 26 and Feb. 26, 1739/40; A Journey from this World to the Next, II, 213; Amelia, IV, iii.

¹⁰ The subject of greatness, and of the great man who is controlled by the selfish emotions, appears repeatedly in Fielding's works, as do the contrasting figures of the good and the great man. Fielding and Mandeville both discriminate between the ideas of good and great. Mandeville points out that vices are necessary for a "great" nation and that virtues can make a small nation "good" but not "great." However, unlike Fielding, Mandeville pays only token attention to the desirability of a "good" nation over a "great" nation, primarily because of his belief in the impracticability of attaining it.

¹⁸ Tom Jones, XII, xii; Jacobite's Journal, Oct. 8, 1748.

greater part of mankind are born capable only of labor (*True Patriot*, Dec. 24, 1745). To utilize best the bulk of the people Fielding, with political rather than moral concern, proposes to replace the luxury of the poor with a carefully regulated program of work (*Increase of Robbers*, XIII, 21-23, 27-28).

Yet behind Fielding's apparently cold-blooded recommendations one discovers his fondness and sympathy for individual man. For example, he pleads for an inquiry into the causes for the increase of robbers, "for that many cart-loads of our fellow-creatures are once in six weeks carried to slaughter is a dreadful consideration; and this is greatly heightened by reflection, that, with proper care and proper regulation, much the greater part of these wretches, might have been made not only happy in themselves, but very useful members of society . . ."

(Increase of Robbers, XIII, 127).

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Thus Fielding's works disclose the strong influence upon his thought of the skeptics and anti-rationalists who believed in the rule of man by the selfish passions. This affinity keeps him out of Shaftesbury's train, where some critics have tried to put him, and qualifies the influence of the Latitudinarians. Like Bayle and Mandeville his approach is practical and utilitarian; like them and others of their group he believes that assumptions about man's behavior should be drawn from study of human nature as it is found. As a result his conclusions differ from those of the idealistic philosopher Shaftesbury, who first views man as a component part in a divine and beautiful order. Shaftesbury inquires what virtue is; Fielding shows man where his happiness lies and how to attain it. If Fielding accepts Shaftesbury's principle that men possess benevolent as well as selfish impulses, he also believes that this is probably not true of all men and he fears that these sparks of benevolence will be snuffed out. If Fielding accepts the benevolist's idea that seeds of goodness are in human nature, like the skeptics he lacks a high opinion of human nature in general and fears for the survival of those seeds. Although he will not accept de jure the Hobbes-Mandeville position that the selfish passions control man, his fear that this is already the case for many, can become the case for all, and will become so without firm precautions reveals a greater affinity with them than with the Shaftesburians. This affinity is illustrated by his speaking not of what the reason should do but of what it can do. The temper of his attitude is revealed less accurately by his hopeful advertisement of the happiness available to the good-natured man who is prudent and virtuous than by his attacks on the de facto state of society which renders such happiness extremely difficult for even the good-natured man to attain.

Avant-Garde Choreography

The past fifteen years have witnessed the emergence of a new group of choreographers, who share the conviction that the proper subject of dance is dancing. They reject the idea that a "story," or even "content" in the traditional sense, is necessary to a dance work. Instead, they assert the independence of dance as pure movement, refusing to make it a handmaiden of drama or music or spectacle. To do so, they have stripped their productions of many of the elements generally associated with this theatrical form. The consequences are an austerity, sparseness and concentration such as the art has not known heretofore. The new works have evoked a good deal of controversy, with reactions ranging from wild enthusiasm to indifference—accompanied by the shrugging comment that "it can't last"—to violent opposition, stirred by the fear that the new choreographers will turn the dancer of the future into a mere robot.

Few members of this avant-garde have received widespread critical attention. Although the movement is centered almost exclusively in New York, where discussion would be expected to flourish, the works of most of these choreographers are shown in small theatres that are not regularly covered by the daily press, and critical notices are largely confined to trade magazines of limited circulation. However, the group is growing. And recently audiences have found that certain trends, thought to be associated only with a small coterie, are appearing in the works of major, established choreographers. The public has begun to note the growing preference for anonymity: the dances that lack not only a story but also any trace of specific characters or recognizable setting; the dancers who move as if oblivious to the fact that there are other dancers on the stage, their faces impassive, their gestures fragmented and detached from any apparent context; the works that

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seem to begin, continue, and end without reference to any familiar pattern of continuity.

Yet the new choreographers have all had their share of experience in more widely accepted idioms, and many had achieved considerable stature in those idioms before turning to the new approach. They cannot be dismissed as merely thoughtless iconoclasts. Some were active participants in the dramatic phase of the modern dance during the 1930's and 1940's. Katherine Litz came from the Humphrey-Weidman company; Merce Cunningham and Erick Hawkins had danced with Martha Graham; Alwin Nikolais was an associate of Hanya Holm. Paul Taylor is now a soloist with the Graham company; Midi Garth and Merle Marsicano had studied at the Graham studio. Not all the avant-garde, however, are allied with the modern dance. James Waring and Aileen Passloff come from the tradition of the ballet. And the best known of all the abstract choreographers (when he chooses to be one) claims sole allegiance to the tradition that developed from the schools of Imperial Russia through the Diaghilev Ballets Russes. He is George Balanchine.

The current avant-garde is a group only insofar as its members share certain basic convictions about the nature of theatre dance. On various questions of technique and methodology, they are sharply divided. But it is the character of their basic convictions that may well shape the course of dance in the future.

As yet, the movement seems to have taken hold principally in New York. Though other sections of the country have seen a few of the works performed by touring companies (and Mr. Nikolais' group has danced with great success on television), the trend seems to be localized. There is no evidence of parallel developments in dance abroad (and it is too early to observe the repercussions, if any, of Mr. Cunningham's performance in Europe this past autumn). Yet the movement is not an isolated phenomenon.

The avant-garde choreographers have much in common with their colleagues in the fields of music and painting, agreeing with them on many aspects of method and purpose. Historically, dance revolutions have always lagged somewhat behind those of the other arts, and the present situation is no exception. As dance discovered expressionism some twenty years after painting had fully developed it, so dance has come to its present version of abstraction at a belated date. The process, however, had to evolve gradually. The choreographer had to feel the need for development from within his own art.

Many of the avant-garde choreographers believe that their innova-

tions began as a reaction to the style of dramatic dance that began to take shape in the late 1920's. They had studied with the pioneers of that era-Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. They were witnesses to discoveries in movement, the creation of new techniques, which their leaders believed were necessary to the expression of themes heretofore untouched by the art of dance. A vocabulary of movements appropriate to fairy tales and to romantic legends of love and loss had long been known. But the delicacy, the symmetrical balance, and the virtuosity of this ballet vocabulary were inadequate to the depiction of dramas of Freudian frustration and social protest. The pioneers of the modern dance sought new movements as a means to the telling communication of deep emotions. Like the expressionist painters, they distorted the positions of the human body to show the violence of the feelings that racked it. Like composers who turned to chromaticism because they found traditional harmonies inadequate to convey their intentions, they broke away from the bounds of the clearly defined center of ballet technique, its equivalent of the diatonic scale-the five, elegantly turned-out positions of the feet to which all classical steps can be referred. Instead of basing their dance on the actions of the limbs, they found a richer, more flexible center in the body (Isadora Duncan had said in the solar plexus) from which emanated movements that were powerful rather than gracious, violent and conflicting rather than smoothly flowing. The new concept of movement impetus heralded a period rich in movement invention.

The new choreographers have accepted the technical innovations of their immediate predecessors but have rejected their motivation. While they see that the desire for expression led to the creation of the new vocabulary, they feel that continued reliance on expression as the source of movement discovery will limit the growth of that vocabulary. They begin, not with feeling, but with movement itself. They find that movements, interesting for their shapes, their textures, their rhythms, can be discovered providing the limitations of concern for expressiveness are not observed. These creators are vitally involved in the search for fresh movement ideas. They think of movement as

an end in itself.

Choreographers working in the tradition of the classical ballet also view movement as an end in itself rather than as a means of expression. But the essence of their style precludes their interest in creating new kinds of movements. They are concerned with the idealization of the dancer as a creature exempt from the necessities of human life—the force of gravity, the practical functions of ordinary movement. The

ballet vocabulary was designed to free the ballerina from the bounds of mortal weight and purposiveness. With consummate grace and elegance, she moves only to move beautifully. To make her also move brilliantly, the vocabulary has been ornamented, but it has not been basically altered. Steps are multiplied; there are more consecutive jumps, longer series of pirouettes. Movements are extended to result in breath-taking balances, or they are accelerated to attain a thrilling velocity. Adherence to the classic principles of balance and proportion keep virtuosity within the realm of art. If the choreographer does prefer a less spectacular approach, he usually takes his clue to movement design from his musical accompaniment. And since the music he selects generally reflects the balletic qualities of clarity, balance, and elegance, he is seldom tempted to explore the potentialities of movements possessing other qualities. The classic conception of dance movement centers attention on refinements within the established idiom.

The members of the avant-garde have little interest in elegance or virtuosity, and they tend to select music quite lacking in the balletic qualities. Consequently they find traditional dance classicism no more congenial than modern dance expressionism. On the contrary, there has been a powerful stimulus to strike out in new directions, spurred negatively by the familiar forms of dance but positively by recent

developments in the other arts.

Like groups of their contemporaries in allied fields, members of the dance avant-garde agree in rejecting traditional limitations of materials, and many of them agree in trusting to intuition and the subconscious to find new ones. In painting, the trend stems from surrealism with its reliance on free intuition, on automatism, on the idea of the work of art being ejected as a stream. Young writers think of a poem as a transference of energy, bursting in a flood from its creator and engulfing the reader, who, without imposing the barrier of reason, yields to its power. Jazz glories in the instinctive spontaneity of its great improvisers. Artists of the Beat Generation, using their own interpretation of Zen Buddhism, discard thought and logic to keep the mind empty, free to respond to the moment. They could point to the purposelessness of the Sumiye painter. Spontaneously following his inspiration, he creates with the speed of a whirlwind, not once allowing deliberation to suggest changes or corrections. Many avant-garde creators feel that ideas for new movements must come to them. They cannot will discovery; it must happen.

In extending the scope of his material resources, the choreographer

has a congenial co-worker in the composer of musique concrète and electronic music. Both have added to the materials of their art, the former by utilizing the natural sounds of the external world, the latter by creating and manipulating mechanically created sounds. Magnetic tape can register more minute distinctions of pitch, more subtle variations of tone, and more precisely timed durations than those possible to any contrivance worked by merely human hands or breath. A similar search has led John Cage to construct his "prepared" piano and Harry Parch to build his own musical instruments. One is reminded also of the modern artist's employment of collage, which has extended his working materials to include so many substances other than paint—wires, newspapers, even articles found in junk heaps.

With such examples before him and without concern for the limitations imposed by either the mandatory elegance of the classic ballet or the expressive motivation of the early modern dance, the new choreographer has set out to extend the dance vocabulary. While trusting his intuition to get him started, he has found several specific

devices to help the procedure along.

One way is to seek fresh combinations of movements. Merce Cunningham does this by isolating actions performed by various parts of the body, writing each on a separate slip of paper, and drawing-by means of chance methods—a movement for the head, one for the arms, one for the torso, one for the legs until he has as many movements as he wishes to combine (or as many as the dancer can execute at one time, this putting a natural limit to the process). More often Mr. Cunningham does not carry this method to its technically possible but actually impractical extreme. He has, however, other, equally effective devices. With deliberately composed movements he can still use a chance method to determine their direction and duration. With such manipulation even a quite common movement takes on an extraordinary quality as it is done slower or faster than usual or if it is executed sidewards instead of forwards as is customary. He has also made notable use of stillness, an element to which he assigns a definite time value and which becomes a positive factor in the choreography.

Katherine Litz shows a similar interest in unusual coordinations, which she calls "inventive movement." By considering each part of the body as an instrument in the orchestra of the whole, she plays one part against another: for example, a quick, small vibrating motion of the foot accompanied by a slow, wide swing of the arm. The result, she feels, is a special, unique quality of movement, a quality that is dissipated when the dancer tries to perform the same coordination

while moving through space. Miss Litz is also intrigued by subtle variations of movement, perhaps a shift in the direction of the arm from straight center to a point between center and diagonal. Such subtleties, too, are destroyed if the dancer travels while performing them. But since inventive movement is interesting in itself, the choreographer should not need to provide the additional attraction of covering all the stage space.

Miss Litz's interest in the coordinations of inventive movement was stimulated by her association with Sybil Shearer, also a former member of the Humphrey-Weidman company. Having left the New York scene in the 1940's, Miss Shearer has since developed her choreography in another direction (John Martin recently called her a "nature mystic"), but she did significantly influence the present avant-garde. In the early years of her independent career, she was intensely concerned with the exploration of movement qualities, especially those produced by juxtapositions of different kinds of movement in different parts of the body. And she, too, felt that this required spatial restriction. Her student Midi Garth shares this interest in movement quality, though she is less involved with its simultaneous complications; she is drawn to movements that are simple yet evocative. Since the basic body pattern need not be intricate, travelling in space may be part of the design.

Alwin Nikolais develops his dance vocabulary by isolating movement from emotional motivation. He defines his method as that of metaphor. By divesting gesture of its familiar function, he obtains a pure movement, a "direct kinetic statement." By carefully watching, for example, the difference in the gesture of an arm that is reaching for a feather and the arm that is reaching for a stone, he abstracts from the movement its qualitative distinctions. These are then freed to be used without reference to any specific context. He defines the resulting kinetic quality in terms of the "primary" emotions (i. e., non-literal, unassociated with any specific object), which include feelings of heavy, light; thick, thin; large, small; fast, slow. They are, he asserts, like

sensations of pure color and pure sound.

Still other choreographers have turned to the arts allied with dance for their inspiration in creating movements. Paul Taylor (who was a painter before he was a dancer) thinks of a movement line as he thinks of a painted line—as a direct, pictorial statement or as a wild, shapeless scribble. Thus, a walk, performed in a clearly defined position and occupying a strictly limited area, may suddenly culminate in a burst of vague, nervous arm gestures that seem to be reaching any-

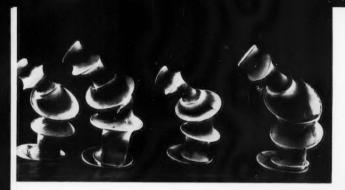
where and everywhere. Either kind of line may be brought into being simply as the sort of design needed to fill a particular space at a particular moment.

Music may also serve as the point of departure, as it does for George Balanchine. Though he has been associated exclusively with ballet, Mr. Balanchine has nevertheless made a considerable contribution to the enrichment of the general dance vocabulary. However, he has not deliberately set out to do so. Unlike his contemporaries in the modern dance he disclaims any interest in discovering new movements. It is very simple to choreograph, he says: you just listen to the music. He calls the kind of music he likes "pure and heartless." It is not the kind that suggests day-dreams to the listener. It is like a rose: you admire it, but it does not involve your personal feelings. To such music the choreographer constructs a kind of visual equivalent in dancing. It cannot be an exact equivalent because no dancer can duplicate in number of movements the number of notes per second that the musician can play. Instead, the choreographer seeks a dominant quality of gesture that will correspond to the quality of the music, that will give an impression of the music's speed, density, and variety. Since Mr. Balanchine likes to use pure, heartless music, he also likes to use pure, heartless movement: "purified gesture," he calls it, "with all the bugs taken out."

The Balanchine ballets that most closely align him with the avantgarde are those created within the past six years to the music of Arnold Schönberg, Charles Ives, Igor Stravinsky, and Anton Webern. Such scores have prompted the choreographer to devise movements that diverge sharply from the customary forms of classic technique. They are, however, always related to that technique; frequently they are extensions or inversions of familiar forms so manipulated as to become almost unrecognizable. A man may not only lift his partner (as in a classical pas de deux) but may actually place her limbs in position as if she were a puppet. Routine steps may be done with the knees turned in instead of out; a conventional pose may be shattered by the flexing of a foot usually pointed; a change of tempo or a shift of rhythmic emphasis may completely transform the quality of the movement. Edwin Denby has remarked that "you see a phrase of dance rhythm include a brief representational gesture, and the gesture's alien impetus and weight-the 'false note' of it-makes the momentum of the rhythm more vividly exact . . . the wit relates to the atonal harmonies of the score." Gestures generally associated with emotional involvement-a

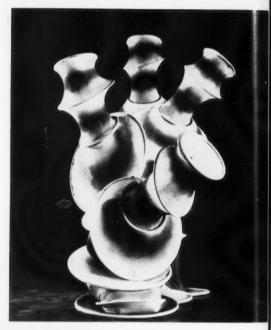


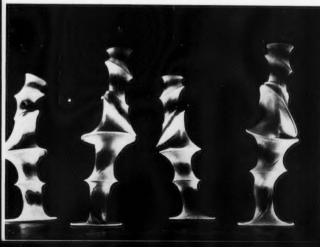
Katherine Litz
PHOTO BY SOSENKO STUDIO



Henry Street Playhouse Dance Company in "Finials" from *Allegory*. Choreography by Alwin Nikolais.

PHOTOS BY DAVID S. BERLIN







Merce Cunningham and Company in *Nocturnes* (Satie)
PHOTO BY LOUIS STEVENSON



Paul Taylor and Akiko Kanda in Paul Taylor's "Tablet"

stamp, a caress—are performed with a cold austerity of attack that betokens detachment—pure and heartless.

Members of the avant-garde are generally partial to unemotional music. Although few of them base their choreography as strictly on the score as does Mr. Balanchine, they make special demands of their sound accompaniment. Usually they like it sparse and undistracting. Merle Marsicano does not want her choreography bound by musical phrasing. Music that consists of occasional, spasmodic sounds suits her purpose best, for then she can construct her own phrasing over and around it. Morton Feldman has composed such scores for her, as he has for a number of her colleagues.

Merce Cunningham, who has worked closely with composer John Cage as well as with musique concrète, wants music that cannot be interpreted emotionally. To make certain that there is no subjective influence, he and Mr. Cage create independently; not even the basic beat is set, though the collaborators do agree on duration—eighteen minutes of dance requires eighteen minutes of music. Since the composer's method is extremely pliable, often asking of the instrumentalist only that he play as much or as little of a section as he wishes within a flexible time span, the requirement is easily met. But how music and choreography meet at any particular moment is left to chance.

Like Mr. Cunningham, Erick Hawkins choreographs his dance in silence. Lucia Dlugoszewski then composes for him a score based on the structure of the "heard pulse," the element which, being common to both the music and the dance, makes neither subordinate to the other. Music governed by melody effects emotional associations that could overwhelm the dance, which is designed to display pure movement devoid of connotations. Because Mr. Hawkins is concerned with the dancer's awareness of each movement as it takes place and because he wants his music to buttress that awareness, he cannot let chance decide the coincidence of movement and sound. Sharing a common foundation, composer and choreographer are free to create individual structures without losing their point of contact.

Non-musical sounds have frequently attracted the new choreographer. Alwin Nikolais often employs sounds created on electronic tape because of their complete lack of literal associations. They offer him qualities as pure as those he extracts from his dancers. Sometimes an atmosphere is desired. Paul Taylor has used the sound of rain in a meditative dance for two girls. His *Epic* is performed to time signals ("at the tone, the time will be," etc.), during which the dancer walks, then stands still; walks, then kneels. Midi Garth has done a dance to a metronome, which suggested the mechanical nature of the movement, and another to bird calls, to which some of the response was literal, some abstract.

Another element to concern the choreographer is that of the visual devices of the theatre. Most avant-garde creators, true to their interest in the self-sufficiency of pure movement, have tended to dress their dancers in simple lines and solid colors (often black) and to give them a bare cyclorama for a setting. But Robert Rauschenberg, the neodadaist artist, has collaborated with several of them. He has designed a matching backdrop and costumes of points of color on white for Mr. Cunningham's Summerspace, so that dancers and background merge into a shimmering unity. For Mr. Taylor's Images and Reflections he made some diaphanous tents that alternately hide and reveal the performer, and a girl's cape lined with grass. Mr. Nikolais has made a distinctive contribution to the arts of costume and décor. In fact, he calls his productions dance-theatre works of motion, shape, light, and sound. To raise the dancer out of his personal, pedestrian self, Mr. Nikolais has experimented with relating him to a larger, environmental orbit. He began with masks to make the dancer identify himself with the creature he appeared to be. He went on to use objects-hoops, poles, capes-which he employed as extensions of the body of the dancer, who moved with them. The depersonalization continued as the dancer was further metamorphosed by the play of lights upon his figure. In each case, the object, the color, even the percussive sounds of the electronic score were designed to become part of the theatrical being of the performer. The dancer who never loosens her hold on a parasol, begins to feel that it is part of herself. Or, clad from head to toe in fabric stretched over a series of hoops, the performer may well lose his sense of self in being a "finial." As the dancer is depersonalized, his accouterments are animized, and the combined elements give birth to a new being. From this being come new movement ideas that utilize dancer and property as a single unit.

Thus, the avant-garde choreographers have extended the scope of materials available for dance composition. But, since they have rejected both narrative and emotional continuity, how are they to unify the impressive array of materials at their disposal? Some look deliberately to devices used by creators in the other arts and apply corresponding methods to their own work. Others, less consciously but quite probably influenced by the trends of the times, experiment with approaches that parallel those of the contemporary poet, painter, and musician.

An approach that has appealed to some choreographers is reminiscent of Charles Olson's statement of the process of projective verse: "one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception." The creator trusts his intuition to lead him along a path that has internal validity because it mirrors the reality of his experience. He disdains external restrictions-conventional syntax, traditional metre. The unit of form is determined subjectively: "the Heart, by way of the Breath, to the Line." The test of form is fidelity to the experience, a gauge also accepted by the abstract expressionist painters.

An earlier but still influential school of painting, surrealism, had suggested the way of dealing with the dream experience, that event in which seemingly incongruous objects are linked together through the curious associations of the subconscious. The resulting picture might appear a maze of restless confusions and contradictions, but it is more true to life than a portrait of an artificially contrived order. The contemporary painter tends to depict not the concrete objects of his experience but their essences as revealed in abstractions of their lines, colors, masses, and energies. He is still concerned, however, with a personal event. He accepts the accidents of his brushwork because they provide evidence of the vitality of the experience of creation. The work must be true to both the physical and the spiritual character of the experience.

Some painters have less interest in the experience of the moment, with its attendant urgencies and ambiguities, than in looking beyond the flux of particular impressions to a higher, more serene level of truth. Rather than putting their trust in ephemeral sensations they seek form in the stable relationships of pure design, which symbolize an order more real than the disorder of the perceptual world. The concept remains subjective. But in this approach it is the artist's ultimate insight, rather than his immediate impressions, that gives form to the work.

Others look to more objective devices of order. The musician employing the serial technique of composition establishes a mathematical system of rotations that, once set in motion, determines the sequence of pitches and even of rhythms and intensities. The composer may reverse or invert the order of his original set of intervals (or rhythms or dynamic changes). He may even alter the pattern by applying a scheme of random numbers. But he cannot order his elements by will, either rational or inspired. The system works as an impersonal mechanism. Musicians who use the chance method also exclude subjective control of formal development. Again, the composer must select his own materials. But a tossing of coins, with perhaps the added safeguard of reference to the oracles of the *I Ching*, the Chinese Book of Changes, dictates the handling of the chosen materials.

Avant-garde choreographers, seeking new forms of continuity for their new vocabulary of movements, have turned to similar approaches. Some let dances take their form from the experience of creation. According to Katherine Litz, "the becoming, the process of realization, is the dance." The process stipulates that the choreographer sense the quality of the initial movement he has discovered and that he feel the rightness of the quality that is to follow it. The sequence may involve a sharp contrast: for example, a quiet meditative sway of the body succeeded by a violent leap; or it may involve more subtle distinctions: the sway may be gradually minimized or enlarged, its rhythmic emphasis may be slightly modified, or it may be transferred to become a movement of only the arms or the head. Even the least alteration will change the quality. An exploration of these possible relationships constitutes the process of creation and thereby gives form to the dance.

The approach to the depiction of the experience of creation may be analytic, as it is for Miss Litz, or spontaneous, as it is for Merle Marsicano. She, too, is concerned with "the becoming, the process of realization," but she does not think in terms of subtle variations of spatial or temporal patterns. The design is determined emotionally: "I must reach into myself for the spring that will send me catapulting recklessly into the chaos of event with which the dance confronts me." Looking back, Miss Marsicano feels that her ideas may have been influenced by those of Jackson Pollock. At one time she felt impelled to make dances that "moved all over the stage," much as Pollock's paintings move violently over the full extent of the canvas. But her conscious need was to break away from constricting patterns of form, a need to let the experience shape itself.

Midi Garth also believes in subjective continuity that begins with the feeling engendered by an initial movement. It may be a free front-back swing of the leg, leading to a sideways swing of the arm that develops into a turn and the sensation of taking off from the ground. This became a dance called *Prelude to Flight*. A pervading quality of free lyricism and a building from turns close to the ground towards jumps into the air gives the work its central focus.

Alwin Nikolais objects to art as an outpouring of personal emotion. He seeks to make his dancers more "godlike" by relating them to the impersonal elements of shape, light color, and sound. If his dancers

are sometimes made to look as if they might be creatures from Mars, this is consistent with his intention of placing them in the orbit of another world, a world in which they are freed of their pedestrian identities. It is through the metamorphosed dancer that the germ of form is discovered. In his recognition of his impersonal self the dancer moves, and this self, in the "first revealed stroke of its existence," states the theme from which all else must follow. The theme may be the formation of a shape from which other shapes evolve. It may be a reaction to a percussive sound, the following movements constituting further reactions. It may establish the relation of the figure of the dancer to light and color, in which case changes in the light or color will set off a kaleidescope of visual designs. Unconcerned with the practical function of his actions, the dancer is engrossed exclusively in their "motional content." Movements unfold freely because they are uninhibited by emotional bias or purposive drive. But the metamorphosis must come first.

Though he is also concerned with freeing dance from pedestrian modes of activity, Merce Cunningham has selected a very different method for achieving his aim. He rejects all subjectively motivated continuity, any line of action related to the concept of cause and effect. He bases his approach on the belief that anything can follow anything. An order can be chanced rather than chosen, and this approach produces an experience that is "free and discovered rather than bound and remembered." Thus, there is freshness not only in the individual movements of the dance but in the shape of their continuity as well. Chance, he finds, enables him to create "a world beyond imagination." He cites with pleasure the comment of a lady, who exclaimed after a concert: "Why, it's extremely interesting. But I would never have thought of it myself."

The sequence of movements in a Cunningham dance is unlike any sequence to be seen in life. At one side of the stage a dancer jumps excitedly; nearby, another sits motionless, while still another is twirling an umbrella. A man and a girl happen to meet; they look straight at the audience, not at each other. He lifts her, puts her down, and walks off, neither pleased nor disturbed, as if nothing had happened. If one dancer slaps another, the victim may do a pirouette, sit down, or offer his assailant a fork and spoon. Events occur without apparent reason. Their consequences are irrelevant—or there are no consequences at all.

The sequence is determined by chance, and Mr. Cunningham makes use of any one of several chance devices. He may toss coins; he may take slips of paper from a grab bag. The answers derived by these

means may determine not only the temporal organization of the dance but also its spatial design, special slips designating the location on the stage where the movement is to be performed. The other variables include the dancer who is to perform the movement and the length of time he is to take in its performance. The only factors that are personally set by the choreographer are the movements themselves, the number of the dancers, and the approximate total duration of the dance. The "approximate" is important, because even after the order of the work has been established by the chance method, the result is not inviolable. Each performance may be different. If a work is divided into several large segments, a last-minute drawing of random numbers may determine the order of the segments for any particular performance. And any sequence can not only change its positions in the work but can even be eliminated from it altogether.

Mr. Cunningham tries not to cheat the chance method; he adheres to its dictates as faithfully as he can. However, there is always the possibility that chance will make demands the dancers find impossible to execute. Then the choreographer must arbitrate. He must rearrange matters so that two performers do not bump into each other. He must construct transitions so that a dancer who is told to lie prone one second and to leap wildly the next will have some physical preparation for the leap. Such interference is completely legitimate as long as the choreographer does not allow any emotional motivation to

affect his decisions.

Disassociation of cause and effect is not, however, exclusively dependent on the chance method, and some choreographers have achieved quite complete discontinuity without it. Many have found that reliance on the subconscious and on unpremeditated accident works very well indeed. Some of their productions recall the devices of surrealism; others resemble the canvas set with collage (as do some of Mr. Cunningham's, who has titled one of his pieces Collage). One of James Waring's dances is performed before a wall decorated with a skull, a telephone, some specimens of type, and a copy of Time. The musical accompaniment includes jazz, a bit of Mozart, some rock n' roll, and a few resounding chords on the organ. Aileen Passloff's Dust uses a ladder, placed in front of the stage and extending above the proscenium, on which a man sits, slowly turning a foil-covered box, as the dancers perform their steps completely oblivious to his presence.

Recent observers have noticed that George Balanchine seems now to be composing sequences of strangely disassociated movements. The source of his choreographic continuity, he insists, is the same as the source of his individual movement-creation: simply-music. If the musical phrases are spasmodic and disconnected, then the dance phrases must reflect these qualities. If the music does not build to a climax, but jerks in fits and starts to a whimper of a conclusion, how can the dance build to a scintillating finale? Mr. Balanchine has called his Agon a "construction in space" and compared it to an IBM computer. The idea of the image came from Stravinsky's score. The choreography is as mathematically precise as the music, as abrupt in its transitions, as clashing in its harmonies. In Episodes Mr. Balanchine translated the music of Webern into fragmented phrases of desperate groping. In a strange reversal of a pas de deux (that lovely high point of a ballet, the love duet) two dancers reach towards one another but fail to make contact; they rush blindly about the stage; when the man finally comes close to his beloved, he places her upon his back where he cannot even see her, and looks beseechingly out into emptiness. The gesture remains incomplete, isolated from its intended function; the music stops short without coming to rest in fulfillment.

In terms of formal structure, even Mr. Balanchine's most recent work can be rather simply described. The duet in *Episodes* is basically a set of variations on a thematic gesture. Other sections of the ballet make extensive use of canon form. It is the nature of the component phrase that causes the apparent strangeness. Because the music of Webern and the later Stravinsky is so economical in form and so concentrated, the texture of the movement is sparse. Edwin Denby has called attention to the elimination of transitional steps in the current Balanchine ballets. The familiar ebb and flow of movement, the preparatory relaxation that precedes a climactic step, are lacking. The dynamics are of a consistently high intensity. Again, as in other contemporary choreography, there is an absence of motive-consequence relationship. There is no time to build anticipation nor to satisfy it. Nor does twelve-tone music rise to a climax and then sink to a comforting resolution.

With new movements, whether deliberately invented or fortuitously discovered, and with new devices of continuity, whether subjectively or objectively determined, the choreographer is ready to present his dance to the public. Will his intentions be stated with sufficient clarity to insure communication? Or is he even concerned with communication?

While some choreographers assert that their works should not "mean" but "be," others feel that their dances do contain meanings.

In Alwin Nikolais' words, they "let the movement speak for itself." But it does speak. According to John Martin, Mr. Nikolais avoids "dramatization" in the sense of "pouring . . . personal emotion into a merely formal container." Some choreographers decide on an emotion and then find a movement-form to embody it. Mr. Nikolais believes that the emotion is not the cause but the product of the movement. The choreographer does not fit the gesture to the feeling; the feeling is already, inherently, there.

The belief in the natural connotations of movement underlies much of the thought of the avant-garde. Paul Taylor justifies his search for new movements by claiming that theirs is the greater connotative power. The balletic vocabulary has lost much of its originally suggestive force through familiarity. The audience looks and says: "Ah, an arabesque!" The pose has become a form so immediately recognizable that their attention is focused almost exclusively on the technique of its execution. The new movement, however, has a significant

shock value. Unaware of "what it is," the audience, free of precon-

ceptions, allows its meaning to unfold.

Just what his meaning is the choreographer will seldom say. Midi Garth is an exception. She describes her intentions with precision, and she wants the audience to respond to the particular emotional quality she feels exists in her dance. But generally, the avant-garde creator is more flexible. Merle Marsicano, for example, is delighted when friends find in her dances meanings that she had not suspected

were there.

Paul Taylor likes to give his dances curiously vague titles: Rebus is one; Option and Meridian are others. The audience is free to interpret them on any of several levels. Erick Hawkins goes further. His Here and Now with Watchers bears sections described as "inside wonder of whales" and "Darling (shouts my body and shouts itself transparent)." He admits that such phrases are bewildering. He wants them to be. After a minute or less of the dance, the spectator realizes that there will be no whales, forgoes trying to pinpoint the meaning, and relaxes, aware only of the immediacy of the pure movement presented to him. Factual titles fill the mind with concepts; fanciful titles empty the mind and let the moving body inhabit it. Some avant-garde titles bear a resemblance to Zen koans.

The new choreographers refuse to be literal. If they can trace their ancestry back to the surrealists, who broke the barrier between dream and reality, they find contemporary counterparts in the artists who reveal the multiple ambiguities and shifting meanings of appearances.

They draw no sharp distinction between thing and idea, between subject and environment. So in a dance the performer may be at once himself and the forces that shape his personality; he may be himself at this moment and himself as remembered or projected into the future; the dance may depict his everyday life or his dream life or both, alternately or simultaneously. The setting is fixed in neither time nor place. The dancer's stage, like a de Kooning canvas, is a "no-environment," its events detached from the circumscribing effects of particularized surroundings. Any specific clues that could be afforded by décor or costume are eliminated. The performers are dancers, and they proclaim the fact by wearing their professional uniform—leotards and tights. If more elaborately clothed, as they are by Mr. Nikolais, their forms belie association with any recognizable period or locale which might delimit their suggestibility. Their faces are usually blank, expressionless.

The spectators are free to interpret as they will, but Mr. Balanchine makes an important stipulation: they should come to look at dancing; they should not try to read their personal lives into what they see. All the avant-garde try to keep them from doing so. Let the movement be fresh, the continuity unfamiliar. And the audience will perceive "a world beyond imagination," ambiguous, but fascinating and provocative.

Certain members of the audience, however, find these procedures only ambiguous and distasteful. Some blame the choreographers of the avant-garde for failing to achieve the ends they have proposed for themselves. Others, granting the creators success in their own terms, argue that their values are mistaken, detrimental to the progress of dance as an art form and even to the status of man as an ethical being.

The complaint most frequently voiced is that these choreographers are playing a private game with themselves. Their ideas are amusing and intriguing; they enjoy working out their esoteric schemes. But they have no concern for communicating with their audience.

One argument of this type alleges that the choreographer's devices, though clearly indicated by verbal exposition, are not visible on the stage. While Mr. Nikolais' concept of the "godlike" self sounds impressive in theory, his actual productions reveal little of this idea. They are marvelous to watch for their ingenious use of properties and theatrical effects, but where is the dancer in all this maze of moving shapes and colors? It seems that, in his fascination with accessories, he has lost sight of his metamorphosed being, who appears as just another form in the total, dazzling design.

Then there is Miss Litz's inventive movement, which involves great subtlety and refinement. The choreographer feels the difference when a slight change of direction, tempo, or dynamics is involved. But the observer may not even perceive the variation much less sense the change in quality. The form is not, in Lincoln Kirstein's telling phrase, "theatrically legible." Elliott Carter has made a similar point about serial techniques in music, extending the objection to add that when the devices are clearly audible, they are too obvious to be interesting. The champions of inventive movement have no desire to be obvious and prefer to relinquish part of their potential audience in order to retain their subtlety. Miss Litz has even remarked that only persons who have themselves experienced the act of artistic creation can under-

stand and appreciate her dances.

On the other hand, Mr. Cunningham wants to appeal to a large audience. His belief that the most revealing moments of life are those that just happen has given him a zeal to convert the uninitiated. Rooted in the I Ching, the Chinese Book of Changes, the chance method is indicative of a view of life. According to Jung, the I Ching postulates that whatever happens at a given moment possesses the quality peculiar to that moment. Thus chance, coincidence, forms an essential part of the picture of existence at any time and place. Not only external events but also the psychic states of the person or persons involved partake of the character of the moment. Therefore, if chance determines the sequence of events in a dance, it also endows each of its moments with a particular quality. But can the audience perceive this fleeting embodiment of quality? Jung notes of the I Ching that the pattern of the moment reveals its meaningfulness only when it is subjected to the principles of interpretation set forth in the book. Chance choreography, however, is not that strictly constructed, and appreciation of it depends ultimately on the spectator's capacity for kinetic response. Can he recognize the particular character that pervades all the apparently disassociated activities taking place at a given moment? Some observers, failing to see any significance, doubt that Mr. Cunningham can help them find it. And since he disclaims any inevitable interpretation for the dance, he says the observers are free to find what they will. If they find nothing revealing, is it their fault or his?

"But then," say some spectators, "we would not mind this lack of meaning so much (after all, we were never bothered by the fact that the 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy' did not mean anything) if you were obviously just showing us beautiful dancing. Your per-

formers are marvelously skilled; they move wonderfully—when you let them move. Often they stand in silence, with only a shoulder or a hand making some slight gesture. Why must there be so much stillness?" Even some avant-garde performers have themselves been disturbed by some of the new choreography, which is frequently so restricted in its spatial scope. Mr. Balanchine, teaching Paul Taylor his solo in *Episodes*, suggested that he behave like a fly in a glass of milk. The performer sighed that he wished it had been in a bowl.

Mr. Balanchine's answer to this accusation is the same as his answer to any other: the demands of the music. For other choreographers there is the concern with movement quality that is altered when travel in space is added to its original dimensions. But all are committed by virtue of their rejection of emotional motivation. Big movements are naturally associated with overflow of feeling: witness the size of the exuberant leap. The avant-garde creator may conceive of such movements, but he will not follow them through to a dramatic culmination. He will stop the impetus if he fears that emotion is determining the extension. Or he will let chance stop it for him. Even the choreographers who form their dances most subjectively find in their first movement a kinetic quality in which they become "motionally" rather than "emotionally" involved. And this inevitably leads to a concern with the subtle variation, the minute change, felt most vividly in the small movement. If the dancer feels it, the observer should see it. The avant-garde say the audience lacks perceptivity. The audience says the avant-garde is egocentric.

The new choreographers' elimination of emotional motivation has brought about the most serious charge against them, that of dehumanization. "Why," asks one of them, "can't I make a dance about the relation of a straight line and a curved one? You don't ask a painter what his work means; why do you ask me?" One answer is that the painter, like the musician, works with inanimate materials. The dancer is a living being and must be treated as such. The artist should not work against his material but should endeavor to exploit its uniqueness. If he wants to manipulate sounds and colors, he should use sounds and

colors, not people.

Vehemently the avant-garde deny the charge. They depersonalize; they do not dehumanize. In the 1940's they found the dance becoming too literal, verging too close to the boundary that distinguishes it from drama. The particularized, realistic character, they feel, is best revealed by speech. The dancer's movement reveals the essence of humanity; it is evocative rather than representational. This may be abstract inso-

far as the dance-character is not conceived as an individual; but it makes him symbolic, not inhuman.

The avant-garde have aimed to divert dance from what they believe has been its false association with literal content. Dance, essentially, is movement. Therefore, the primary concern of the choreographer is with movement, not as a means, but as an end in itself. The choreographer may make a dance about the relation of a straight line and a curved one. But as performed by a living body those lines will carry connotations that no other artistic medium could elicit from them. The dancer's movements are connotative by nature. Meanings should not be superimposed upon them. They speak of the human being who

performs them.

There is one further objection. Are not the members of the avant-garde evading their responsibility as artists? Is it not their duty to make movement more meaningful than it is by nature? Or by chance? It is the function of the artist to give form to the experience that the non-artist finds disordered and obscure. The artist should discover and communicate his view of the significance of life, not merely present us with more ambiguities. He should shape experience, not just experience it. One is reminded of the attitude of the Beat Generation, who want to "dig" everything and assert that "everything will be all right" as long as they have their "kicks." The avant-garde want only to show us their "kicks." Their ideal is the primitive, the self-indulgent man of instinct and not the socially valuable man of reason. Those of them who avoid intuition retreat into the game of Oriental mysticism or into pure formality.

To this the choreographer replies that it all depends on how you define the role of the artist. He does not presume to assign himself the lofty status of the preacher or prophet. He is an artist of movement, and to deal with anything beyond movement would be to transgress his proper function. He is only a maker of dances, and he tries to

make good ones.

Unquestionably the members of the avant-garde have made a significant contribution to the art of dance. They have tremendously broadened the range of the dance vocabulary and revealed its wealth of connotative power. They have explored new relationships between movement and sound, movement and light and color. They have stimulated a fresh awareness of the uniqueness of the medium of dance. If they have not demonstrated that dance must do away with content and narrative or emotional continuity, they have shown that dances can be formed without them. And if their proposed forms are un-

acceptable, they have at least provoked inquiry into alternate possibilities. Perhaps some of the principles at which they rebel are more deeply rooted in human needs than they believe. But then the shock of their attack may encourage more vigorous direction and growth from those principles in the future.

If some observers cannot yet respond favorably to the works of the avant-garde, the choreographer asks them to be patient. He does not deny the ambiguities of his language; he glories in them. He feels that his contact with his audience is greater than that of his predecessors, for he asks his spectators to join him in the act of creation. Part of the dance, its meaning, is up to them. If they see no more in his works than dancers dancing, he is satisfied. After all, that is what he intended.

Tragic and Comic Modes

We like to have things turn out happily, for others as for ourselves. But as literature draws closer to life, a contrived happy ending is held in less esteem. We know we must be prepared not to surrender our trust in the significance of human life when the happy ending is not there. We know that we are for the most part ugly ducklings who will not become swans but remain ugly and remain ducklings. Comedy and tragedy are not to be distinguished by tears and laughter, happiness and unhappiness. When they are deep, tears and laughter get mixed up; people cry for great happiness, and a terrible kind of laughter occasionally marks the shock of grief, in a reversion of both laughter and tears to the primitive protective shudder. And as for happiness and unhappiness, we ask: happiness for whom? unhappiness for whom? Part of the mystery of Hamlet is that he comes to identify happiness with death and pities those who must continue to live. Nor is Hamlet the only tragic hero who has looked at us this way from the other side of death and suffering.

Comedy and tragedy refer to particular human values not directly but indirectly, by taking up these values into the whole system of values of which they are a part. The essential job of comedy is to keep a given system of values in proportion; the comic spirit does not challenge the system but rather calls attention to inconsistencies and lack of proportion within it. Tragedy, however, challenges one system of values in the name of another; it must break the circle of one order so that the presence of another more inclusive one will be felt. Before I am through I shall attempt to generalize this idea perhaps further

than one should venture in mere literary theory.

Comedy comes not to destroy but to restore balance. By putting before us an exaggerated disproportion it teaches us to see the disproportion in ourselves and in our system of values. In the fun house at the fair you look at yourself in the mirrors; some make you fat, some thin, some wavy. But the comic spirit is satisfied only when you

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find yourself laughing finally at your reflection in a perfectly honest mirror. It is not only your sacred self that you must be willing to subject to the test of ridicule; it is everything that you are ordinarily most complacently serious-minded about-your family, your job, your school, your church, your government, even your automobile. When we really believe that owning an automobile can be a "richly rewarding experience" (Cadillac advertisement), then all hope for beauty and grace is gone from life; when we stop laughing at the president, liberty is dead. The comic spirit is the only healthy spirit to have when one must live with a given system of values, when not the system itself but only the relative shaping of it may be questioned. A sense of humor is the real source of sanity for a prisoner of any sort, in a cell, in a white collar, in the army. Even in military combat there is more redemption in humor than in seriousness; for one thing, the comic spirit is a merciful spirit. When justice is tempered by mercy, it may be that the judge has been saved by a vision of his own over-zealous righteousness. If we are the prisoners of the universe, if we are the judges of the universe, what then? Sir Charles Sherrington, discussing the smallness of man and his effort to understand nature, said, "Coming from such a quarter, praise or blame . . . is equally an impertinence." 1 I like to think that theologians console themselves with the thought that God will take kindly to their efforts to define his existence.

We do persist in setting up our systems of knowledge and value, and we have to because we are human beings. The comic spirit is the corrector, not the destroyer, of these systems. The comic spirit is even sometimes a system-builder, though not a very successful one. But it is not at all a rebuilder. It cannot survive defeat. Only tragedy dares to suggest that something can be left when everything is gone, to assert life in the midst of death and happiness in the midst of suffering. Charlie Chaplin and Emmett Kelley reminded us of this essential shortcoming of the comic view by playing their roles against the suggestion of a tragic background. Bernard Shaw was aware of this too, in his remarks about Sean O'Casey: "His plays are wonderfully impressive and *reproachful* without being irritating like mine. People fall crying into one another's arms saying God forgive us all! instead of refusing to speak and going to their solicitors for a divorce." ²

In the greatest tragic drama there is tension between systems and a breaking of one in the name of the other. For example, in Sophocles'

¹ Man on His Nature (New York, 1953), p. 16.

² Hesketh Pearson, G. B. S., A Full Length Portrait (New York, 1942), p. 354 n.

Antigone the tension is between the state and the public good, as represented by Creon, and the laws of the gods, the immutable claim of kinship, represented by Antigone: "... if I must die, I say that this crime is holy...." In Greek tragedy it is not only the human frame of order that may be broken. "Even the gods themselves," Willard Farnham has said, "may suffer tragedy for their lack of ability to reconcile the conflicting demands of goodness." ³ Shakespearian tragedy is also founded in the awareness of an order that is being violated; recent studies have taught us to see the horror with which Shakespeare observed disorder, especially in the affairs of leaders of men, the living symbols of a public order that is cognate with the natural order. Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello—all after their fashion attain tragic stature by generating personal energy for the assertion of value either in the face of certain defeat or, more heroically, following a defeat that is certain and absolute.

Othello's claim to tragic stature has seemed dubious to many who have encountered T. S. Eliot's remark about Othello's "cheering himself up" in his last speech, "Soft you; a word or two before you go." If this is true, the play is nothing but an expenditure of beautiful poetry on a sordid and depressing theme—an expense of spirit in a waste of shame. But it is not true; in that speech Othello turns from the complete destruction of his personal world to reassert that greater world in which he sees a surviving and enduring order: the order of the state, the order of rationality and honest truth-speaking. He is not trying to build himself up again, but to proclaim in the midst of his own defeat that there is an order of right, and that his own constructive part in that order has not been obliterated. Once more for a moment he is the brilliant general, able to see and appraise the truth. Othello's values may be strange to us, but they are values; by asserting them Othello adds the dimension of tragedy to his defeat.

Perhaps if we stand back from the vexing details of *Hamlet* we may interpret its general shape this way: Hamlet, who is associated quite early and firmly in the play with reason, measure, and sobriety, finds himself steadily being entrapped by irrational forces: lying, lust and greed, murder and supernatural torment. According to one system of values, built on filial duty and political responsibility, he must himself adopt and use irrational force, "sweep to his revenge." That Hamlet sees the terms of this system as irrational is suggested again and again, for example by his hint that to operate within it he must feign madness,

^{*} The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), p. 439.

much as a sober person might feign a bit of drunkenness at a party, to avoid being coerced into the real thing. But Hamlet experiences the real madness of this world of lies and guilt; we see this perhaps most starkly when he sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to death. How is Hamlet, who might be nothing more than an inept and rather nasty revenge-hero, raised to tragic stature? He is redeemed because he never completely loses sight of that other, larger system of reason and honor, which Laertes for example does not even know exists. Like Othello, the dying Hamlet points tragically to surviving things: the voice of reason and history in Horatio, the voice of sane government in Fortinbras. Hamlet's dilemma is our dilemma: to act in one world where action is mean and sordid, while the spirit sees a greater world and wants to live there.

A more extended discussion of a particular tragedy and a particular comedy is called for before I attempt to generalize further. For the purpose I have chosen two plays which are separated by many distances of time, style, and purpose, but which have a few interesting simi-

larities on which a comparison may be hung.

Molière's L'École des Femmes and Synge's Deirdre of the Sorrows 4 have this much in common: they both relate the efforts of an older man to have a young girl raised in such a way that she will be his ideal bride, and the thwarting of the plan in part by a young man and in part by the nature of young girls. It is clear that both plays are related to what might be called the "virgin-bride" plot, in which there are represented many of the taboos and amenities of virginity. Selfish old men or wicked old women lock up or enslave the virgin; heroic young men attempt to rescue her. The range of possibilities here runs from Sleeping Beauty and Snow White to the complex and tragic figures of Nastasya Filippovna in Dostoevsky's The Idiot (who prefigures both Mary Lebyatkin and Grushenka) and Dr. Zhivago's Larisa. In one sense at least it is not so very far from the happy domesticity of Snow White, keeping house for the seven merry little eunuchs, to the deep peace which Larisa and Dr. Zhivago find in the little cottage near Yuratin.

Neither Molière's comedy nor Synge's tragedy can be called shallow, yet it is not so easy to judge which of them has the more to say about human life. Unquestionably Molière has the greater understanding of

^{*}Deirdre was left unfinished, but I make no apology for choosing it as my example. Its tragic essence is intact, though the forms of the vision, as in the "unfinished" works of Michelangelo, must remain only half released from silence.

the kinds of thinking and activity to which most of us are prone most of the time; but this grasp of human nature leads not to individualization of character but to the fusion of the individual to the type. Molière has no desire to get us deeply involved in the story of Agnès; her shape as a person is secondary to the role she must play in the dominating scheme of the play, which is to tell us something about society, something that will, through us, tend to preserve a balanced system of values. Each character suffers a leveling-out (Agnès to a sexually titillating idiot, Arnolphe to a lecherous buffoon) as their creator must use them to speak to us as a crowd, a society which may be healthy or unhealthy-not as individuals who must aspire and suffer. Molière's drama is par excellence the drama of ideas. The reign of ideas over the plays produces in them a strong determinism, and a high probability that each character, by the end of the play, will approach more closely to the hypothetical norm or type. Molière's creations do not break free; even Alceste, as Émile Faguet pointed out long ago, should be called merely l'Insociable, not le Misanthrope. More recently, Georges Poulet has said that there are in Molière two universes: "one of customs; the other of passions." He believes that the universe of passions in Molière is tragic because it is a repetitive process, a "perpetual reincarnation of the hungry desire, the generation in a closed cycle of passion triumphant and passion frustrated. . . . " 6 On the contrary I believe that because the cycle is closed it is essentially incapable of becoming tragic. When one is speaking of a supremely comic drama this is not a criticism.

Synge's Deirdre tells us both more and less. Society is no longer, as in Molière, a shared process based on concepts of ownership and money, but an arena of forces which find their resolution inside the characters. The forces are intangible and compelling, but tragic status is to be achieved by one who breaks free into the sense of a meant life—of having intended, sub specie aeternitatis, at least the final act and, through it, the shape of the whole. A person in the audience who is to share this experience dramatically will do so only to the extent that he becomes more aware of his own individuality, not forgetting society but incorporating it in himself. In tragedy the society is redeemed in the man; in comedy the society is to be "the redeemed form of man" (to borrow the phrase of the elder Henry James). The essential action of Deirdre is to renounce the role that society (King

⁵ En Lisant Molière (Paris, 1914), p. 45.

^o Studies in Human Time (Baltimore, 1956), pp. 101, 102.

Conchubor) has planned for her and assume in death the transcending freedom that circumstances cannot allow her in life: "I will not be your queen in Emain when it's my pleasure to be having my freedom on the edges of the hills." But this assumption of individuality by Deirdre is also a social act, because in her, or in the relationship which exists at the end between Deirdre and Conchubor, lies the fate of Emain. As she speaks her last words Emain is burning, and when Deirdre lies in the grave Fergus says, "The flames of Emain have gone out: Deirdre is dead and there is none to keen her. That is the fate of Deirdre and the children of Usna, and for this night, Conchubor, our war is ended." And, adds Lavarcham, "if the oaks and stars could die for sorrow, it's a dark sky and a hard and naked earth we'd have this night in Emain." Just as Lear continues to dominate his kingdom and match and conquer in himself even the storm on the heath, so Deirdre stands higher than society, and dramatically speaking the sky does darken and the earth becomes hard and naked as Lavarcham says

it might.

If "I will not be your queen in Emain when it's my pleasure to be having my freedom on the edges of the hills" is taken as a key speech of Deirdre's, one searching in L'École des Femmes for an equivalent speech in the comic mode by Agnès might select "Et pourquoi, s'il est vrai, ne le dirais-je pas?" Deirdre's vision of freedom rends and destroys Emain; Agnès brings in the light of health and sanity with her naive truth-telling. On the other hand, to the extent that she must be a facetious type, Agnès has no origin, no roots, while Deirdre from the beginning asserts her right as a human being to have air to breathe and earth to live on. We might compare the very first speeches of the two. To Arnolphe's rather formal greeting, "Vous vous êtes toujours, comme on voit, bien portée?" Agnès responds, "Hors les puces, qui m'ont la nuit inquiétée." The joke is a theatrical one: the ingénue has fleas! The remark also serves of course to establish Agnès from the start as one who will speak only the truth; but basically it is a joke, one which is repeated shortly when to Arnolphe's "Quelle nouvelle?" Agnès answers, "Le petit chat est mort." Compare to all this Deirdre's response to Conchubor's "What have you brought from the hills?": "A bag of nuts, and twigs for our fires at the dawn of the day." She too is free from sophisticated concerns and answers a question with the plain truth; but her answer goes beyond that. It establishes her relationship to nature and her involvement in the ordinary concerns of ordinary people-to establish the measure of humanity which she must transcend. (The difference in

degree of vulgarity is also of course important, but incommensurable; each play should be not too vulgar and not too idealized on its own level. Molière suffers perhaps from the first, Synge perhaps from the second.)

Agnès rises to an understanding of her position in society, as a living

criticism of Arnolphe and those who think like him:

Vous avez là-dedans bien opéré vraiment, Et m'avez fait en tout instruire joliment! Croit-on que je me flatte, et qu'enfin, dans ma tête, Je ne juge pas bien que je suis une béte?

Deirdre rises to a vision beyond life:

I have put away sorrow like a shoe that is worn out and muddy, for it is I have had a life that will be envied by great companies. It was not by a low birth I made kings uneasy, and they sitting in the halls of Emain. It was not a low thing to be chosen by Conchubor, who was wise, and Naisi had no match for bravery. It is not a small thing to be rid of grey hairs, and the loosening of the teeth. (With a sort of triumph.) It was the choice of lives we had in the clear woods, and in the grave, we're safe, surely. . . .

Agnès helps us to know how to live the life we've got; Deirdre tells us whether it is worth living.

These plays, like other works of art, are essentially incomparable. In offering to compare them I have not meant to suggest that any estimates of value are being made or that the virgin-bride plot is better suited to the one or to the other. My purpose has been to accentuate similarities in order to help define the modes of tragedy and comedy as ways of experiencing life.

Comedy is experienced as a shared process in which most types of behavior have a high probability of recurrence; less probable types of behavior are under the steady pressure of society to drift toward more probable forms, whether of alienation or assimilation. Then, with a protective shudder of laughter, society achieves a new balance. Extreme forms of behavior collapse under the weight of mutual attraction or repulsion, and the individuals are redeemed in society. At the end of a comedy we say vicariously, "My God, what fools we've been!" This moment of collapse into the awareness of the relation of the self to society may be rendered in a thousand ways; a gesture may be most effective, as when Molière's Arnolphe, "ne pouvant

parler," disappears from L'Ecole des Femmes with the expression "Ouf!" by which I suppose Molière represented some gesture of collapse, such as pressing the palms down on the head. Compare with this the exit of Conchubor from Deirdre of the Sorrows: "(with the voice of an old man). Take me with you. I'm hard set to see the way before me." Synge has given him just a touch of Oedipus; the effect is to humanize Conchubor as a person who has suffered a final breaking of self upon the wheel of the world, if only in the wake of Deirdre.

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Tragedy is experienced as a conflict between the self and the system, in which the self must break because the system cannot be broken. Only by a destroying act can the self assert, sub quâdam aeternitatis specie, a system of values other than the one in which it is trapped. The society is redeemed in the individual. Comedy may be said to exist in the realm of what physicists call "soft determinism": the realm of probability. Tragedy exists in the realm of "hard determinism," where the iron laws of causality chain the self to an absolute acquiescence or an absolute revolt. Comedy presents us with a problem of style of life. Tragedy presents us with the dilemma of slavery or freedom.

Physicists speak of systems as being either "open" or "closed." For a closed system there is no environment; that is, there is no enclosing system with which the first system can exchange energy. Henry Adams' favorite bogey, the second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy, tells us that a closed system will inevitably run down; sooner or later all the energy will take an unavailable form. If the universe is a closed system it will eventually lapse into the comfortable security of death. If the universe is an open system, as Fred Hoyle for example suggests, energy is not exhaustible and the law of entropy will not prevail. It is hard to imagine that we shall ever know.

In the universe viewed as a closed system, "soft determinism" holds ever-increasing sway and the comic spirit must rule over all. We shall all play our roles in the Divine Comedy; there is only one acte gratuit: to exist. In the universe viewed as an open system, the tragic mode of experience brings to us a different kind of necessity, the necessity to choose and to act. Discussions of "freedom of the will" get lost in a semantic cloud; the important thing is that human beings can imagine alternatives and experience the act of choosing among them. In a closed system the act is futile against the ultimate. In an open system the tragic spirit may be vindicated.

⁷ See Corollary I of Proposition XLIV, Part II of Spinoza's Ethics: ". . . it is

That tragedy is not compatible with a closed system of values may be illustrated by the failure of any Christian writer to put the story of Jesus successfully into the form of a tragedy.⁸ The broken body on the cross is removed by dogma; a deity is placed there instead. As Willard Farnham has said:

The tendencies manifested in the Arian heresy had long ago been conquered. Hence the crucifixion could at the most be made to arouse a tragic pity for perfect goodness suffering ironically at the hands of lost creatures whom it had come to save; it could not be made to arouse the tragic terror that comes with the view of a hero helping to seal his own doom through imperfections recognizably like our own.9

It is of course not true that the Arian heresy had been "conquered." In William Ellery Channing's Baltimore sermon of 1819 and in Theodore Parker's "Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" (1841) one finds just this criticism leveled at orthodox Christianity. Parker, for example, wrote,

...if, as some early Christians began to do, you take a heathen view, and make him a God, the Son of God in a peculiar and exclusive sense, much of the significance of his character is gone. His virtue has no merit, his love no feeling, his cross no burden, his agony no pain. His death is an illusion, his resurrection but a show. For if he were not a man, but a god, what are all these things? ... Then his resignation is no lesson, his life no model, his death no triumph to you or me, who are not gods, but mortal men, that know not what a day shall bring forth, and walk by faith "dim sounding on our perilous way." 10

In other words Parker is claiming that only in the tragic mode can society be redeemed in a man.

It was very acute of Browning to make Caliban into a theologian.

only through our imagination that we consider things . . . as contingent." Spinoza lamented this; but the imagination is the source of all art and knowledge.

⁸ In spite of its misleading title, "The Possibilities of Christian Tragedy," a recent article by Elias Schwartz (*College English*, XXI [1960], 208-213) does not deal with this problem, but discusses instead the possibility, hardly disputed, that a Christian may respond to tragic drama. He may, but only insofar as he ceases to be *distinctly* Christian.

* The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, p. 175.

10 Views of Religion (Boston, 1900), p. 313.

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In *The Tempest* Prospero is the supreme god of a closed system; he is absolute in power but merciful when amused. The Duke in *Measure for Measure* is another such little god. The indefinably odd quality which some commentators have found in the "late comedies" may perhaps be attributed to Shakespeare's placing events ordinarily suggestive of the tragic mode into the framework of a closed system, the domain of the comic spirit. Was he trying to write tragedy from God's viewpoint instead of from man's?

William Blake's "Divine Analogy"

it grew & grew till it
Became a Space & an Allegory around the Winding Worm.
They nam'd it Canaan & built for it a tender Moon.
Los smil'd with joy, thinking on Enitharmon, & he brought
Reuben from his twelvefold wand'rings & led him into it,
Planting the Seeds of the Twelve Tribes & Moses & David,
And gave a Time & Revolution to the Space, Six Thousand Years.
He call'd it Divine Analogy, for in Beulah the Feminine
Emanations Create Space, the Masculine Create Time & plant
The Seeds of beauty in the Space. . . . (Jerusalem)

William Blake's symbolic poetry has sometimes been considered a monstrous bagatelle, a product of Blake furioso. In part, this erroneous deduction is based upon a serious misunderstanding of Blake's mythopoeia. Indeed, Blake's poetry is a kind of ameboid projection that becomes lost from the parent body of eighteenth century literature. It is with reason, if not justification, that Southey called Jerusalem "a perfectly mad poem. . . . Oxford Street is in Jerusalem." Difficulties inevitably arise with a man who believed that the foot of Calvary began only a few steps from his residence in South Molton Street (M 484: 21)¹ and who placed two of the sons of Jacob upon Penmaenmawr and Snowdon (FZ 281: 53). Blake's mind was ever upon making London a Jerusalem in "England's green & pleasant Land." What is the "Chimney-sweeper's cry" through "each charter'd street" in the Songs of Experience (1794) becomes some twenty years later in Jerusalem "The voice of Wandering Reuben [that] ecchoes

^{*}Paul Miner, who has studied at the Universities of Wichita, Kansas, and California, has published a number of articles on Blake in such journals as the Bulletin of the New York Public Library and the University of Texas Studies in Literature and Language.

¹References to Blake's poetry and prose are taken from the Nonesuch edition of *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (1957). Numbers preceding the colon are page numbers, those that follow the colon line references. Abbreviations to Blake's work are as follows: *BU-The Book of Urizen*, FZ-Four Zoas, M-Milton, J-Jerusalem, GP-The Gates of Paradise, EG-The Everlasting Gospel.

from street to street..." The metamorphosis of a London "sweep" into a Son of Israel succinctly illustrates the extent to which Blake expanded his difficult and tortuous Anglo-Judaic symbology. Blake's later poetry is a major form of what must be called the "pedagogical epic," and by English standards this is a complex and devious genre.

One facet of Blake's symbolism which has, in part, gone unnoticed is his preoccupation with what he calls the "Spiritual Verse" of "The Five books of the Decalogue" (J 677: 8-9), and it is from these first five books of the Bible that we can trace some of Blake's most striking symbolism. Briefly the books (ignoring Genesis, which has only minor relevance to my present purpose) concern the birth of Moses and God's appearance to him in the burning bush. Moses is appointed as an instrument of God and is given the tables of stone, upon which the finger of God has written the laws of the Decalogue. Moses and the Israelites are instructed by Jehovah to construct a tabernacle and an ark, upon the latter of which is to be placed a golden lid, the mercy seat. These images symbolize Jehovah's covenant with man, and the stones of the Decalogue are placed within the ark, beneath the mercy seat; on each side of the ark, and hovering over the mercy seat, are two golden cherubim. It is over the ark and tabernacle that the presence of God is acknowledged as a cloud by day and a fire by night. Moses, as God's agent, decrees the ten commandments which were given in Horeb or Sinai (the terms are synonymous), and after the wandering tribes have been assured entrance into Canaan, the promised land, Moses (never entering the precincts of Canaan itself) expires in the land of Moab. With the death of Moses the five books come to a close.

Blake's interest in the Mosaic theme, particularly the narration as found in Exodus, was prominent in his thinking even as a beginning apprentice in the shop of James Basire, as a drawing of Moses and the Tables of Stone was executed in 1774 (another of the same subject and of about the same period also is extant). In addition to these drawings, Blake is known to have executed, at various times, at least nine other studies concerning Moses. It is significant that these works chronicle the beginning of Exodus (The Ark in the Bulrushes) and go through, in part, to the end of Deuteronomy (The Burial of Moses), the last of the five books. In the early symbolic poetry as

² J729: 13. The passages are not accidental, as a comparison of the designs in "London" of Experience and Jerusalem (plate 84) confirms.

³ For a catalogue of the Moses subjects, see Thomas Wright, *The Life of William Blake* (Olney, 1929), II, 171.

well, the influence of the Mosaic sequences appears. In All Religions Are One (circa 1788) Blake refers to "The Jewish & Christian Testaments," and in the design of this plate he illustrates the tables of law and Urizen, who is a member of the Urizen-Moses-Jehovah cognate in Blake's parabolic system. In The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (circa 1790-1793) Blake refers to the "ten commandments" in opprobrious terms, and in A Song of Liberty (probably 1793) he calls attention to the "starry king" (later to become Urizen, your reason) "leading his starry hosts thro' the waste wilderness, [where] he promulgates his ten commands . . . ," the allusion being to Moses' wanderings in the wilderness and to the laws of the Decalogue. The tables of the testimony, or stones of law, are illustrated in the design to the title-page of The Book of Urizen (1794), and a most fleeting allusion to the tabernacle, or tent, is found in this book (231: 2-7, cf. Exodus xxxvi. 36-38). In The Song of Los (1795) Blake notes that "Moses beheld upon Mount Sinai forms of dark delusion" (245: 17).

Blake frequently mentions the daughters of Zelophehad, who symbolize the feminine powers of the fallen world, as these characters were given the birthrights of the male, Zelophehad having no sons. Among these daughters of the books of Moses, Blake takes Tirzah as a major symbol. In Milton (528: 23-24) he speaks of the "Priestesses infolded in Veils of Pestilence border'd / With War " a probable allusion to Numbers xv. 38-39, in which the children of Israel are to make "fringes in the borders of their garments," the fringes symbolizing "the commandments" of Jehovah-and to Blake the perversions of imagination. In Jerusalem (715: 47-48) Blake refers to the Levites and their forty-eight cities, aware of the fact that this tribe was allotted only cities within the lands of the other Israelite tribes (Numbers xxxv. 7). As a further example, in Milton (490: 1-7) the female "Space is named Canaan," and in Jerusalem (662: 5-6) Reuben, reduced to a vegetative mass, is sent "over Jordan," a frequent Pentateuch epithet signifying the entrance into the land of Canaan, the area of generation in Blake's symbolism. References to the tribal divisions of the Israelites, having relevance to the Mosaic documents, punctuate the symbolism of The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem, books which represent Blake's poetic labors from 1795 to 1820. The Mosaic commentary, or the Five Books of Moses as they are titled in the Bible, is central to Blake's own narrative, and in Jerusalem he emphasizes its importance: ". . . Albion was call'd the Canaanite & all his Giant Sons. / Hence is my Theme" (715: 39-40). The fact that Blake early became interested in the text concerning

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Moses, and that references and allusions to the "Five Books" continue as a crucial theme through to the penult textual page of *Jerusalem*, Blake's last great symbolic book, demonstrates the continuity and influence that the Biblical volumes exercised on his own imagination. It also should be added that the motivating theme of *The Ghost of Abel* (1822), dedicated "To Lord Byron in the Wilderness," is partly based upon the imagery of the ark and tabernacle, and Blake illustrated the ark in a striking design for his Dante drawings (illus. 80), executed about 1827.

What has not been understood, except for miscellaneous aperçus, is the rich "enamel" of sexual context that Blake overlaid upon the symbolism of the ark, tabernacle, and covenant (the sources of which are, for the most part, confined to the Pentateuch), the holy objects of the Israelites.

Although the following analysis of Blake's quixotic imagery is selfexplanatory, it should be prefaced with the observation that the sexual themata of much of Blake's symbolism has been recognized as an integral part of his myth. The grotesque illustration of the weird, bearded conceptus in utero in the so-called Rossetti Manuscript (circa 1793), the frequent and obvious ithyphallic sketches in The Four Zoas, Blake's self-censorship of plate 38 in Milton, and the dreadful winged pudendum which appears like some kind of Rorschach monster in Jerusalem (plate 58; cf. plate 25), along with a design to The Book of Enoch (about 1827, not long before Blake died), are random, but poignant, examples which indicate clearly that sexual imagery was a persistent and important motif in Blake's pictorial imagination. Blake himself recognized its importance in the genesis of his own art-form, as the daughters of Beulah, creatures of the idyllic land of marriage (the etymological meaning of the Hebrew word), are "Muses who inspire the Poet's Song"; the daughters of Beulah exist in the realms of "mild moony lustre in soft sexual delusions," and in the opening passage of Milton, in which Blake speaks in propria persona, he implores these sexual sprites to descend into the "Nerves of my right arm" and guide his Miltonic theme.4 Blake acknowledged a pivotal part of his nature when he wrote that the "spectrous Fiend" who haunted him for "twenty years" was the "enemy of conjugal love" (Letter to Hayley, pp. 851-2). To Blake the "laws of punishment" denied

⁴ It is a symbolic fairy, a creature of the generative world, fed on "love-thoughts" and "poetical fancies," who "sat upon the table and dictated EUROPE" (1794).

inspiration (J 628: 14-16). Ultimately, in Blake's symbolism, the act of coitus becomes a propitiatory offering, a sacrifice of the selfhood; and in order to understand fully the ramifications of this symbolism

it is necessary to turn to Biblical imagery and Judaic myth.

Blake in his marginalia to Lavater's Aphorisms (circa 1788) notes that "Man is the ark of God; the mercy seat is above, upon the ark; cherubims guard it on either side, & in the midst is the holy law; man is either the ark of God or a phantom of the earth . . ." (82). In A Vision of the Last Judgment (613) Blake mentions the table of showbread and the candelabrum, articles connected with the worship of the ark. In Jerusalem (706: 47-51) he refers to "the fires," the altar of burnt offerings (Exodus xxvii), and to the female's "secret tabernacle" and "ark & holy place" and makes mention that the warrior-victim of the female (that is, the ark) is "Smitten as Uzzah [who touched the ark] of old..." Blake undoubtedly was aware of the pestilence with which the ark was connected, as in I Samuel v. 9, 12, the Philistines who had stolen the ark were stricken with "emerods in their secret parts" by Jehovah.

In a manuscript fragment (543) Blake also mentions Bezaleel and Aholiab, the craftsmen inspired by Jehovah to construct the tabernacle and ark (cf. Exodus xxxi), and in The Gates of Paradise (revised 1818) Blake refers to the rearing up of the tabernacle (Exodus xxvi. 30) and to "Jehovah's Finger [that] Wrote the Law" (Exodus xxxi. 18, xxxii. 16) and "the Dead Corpse from Sinai's heat / Buried beneath his Mercy Seat," alluding of course to the Decalogue promulgated upon the fiery mount. He associates "The Veil of Goat's-hair & Purple & Scarlet & fine twined Linen" (connected with the ark in Exodus xxxvi. 8-14, xxvi. 1-7) with the generative looms of the daughters of Los (1692: 45-55). The ark was carried before the bands of Israelites (Numbers x. 33), and Blake notes that Vala (who is a guise of Rahab, the mother-death goddess) is carried "before his [Nimrod's] Armies" in a "golden Ark" (J 644: 3-5, cf. Joshua vi. 1-20) and that the "Arks of Oak" (this is "English Blake" speaking, as the Biblical ark was constructed of shittim wood) are carried "before the armies in the spring" (J 644: 45).

Pejoratively Blake connects the tabernacle of Exodus with the generative organs: it is the Lamb of God who asks of Jerusalem why she

blackens her sons'

beauty by a Secluded place of rest, And a peculiar Tabernacle to cut the integuments of beauty Into veils of tears and sorrows [generation], O lovely Jerusalem? They have perswaded thee to this; therefore their end shall come, And I will lead thee thro' the Wilderness in shadow of my cloud [a cloud by day].... (J 693: 32-36)

In the generative world of "Sin" it is "Love's temple that God dwelleth in"; this is the "secret hidden shrine" that hides the "Naked Human form divine" (EG 755: 63-68, cf. 754: 15-23). The "Female Will" hides "fearful/The Divine Vision with Curtain & Veil & fleshy Tabernacle." ⁵ The tabernacle, then, is associated with the female power over man in the fallen world:

O Albion, why wilt thou Create a Female Will?
To hide the most evident God in a hidden covert, even
In the shadows of a Woman & a secluded Holy Place
That [in the sex act] we may pry after him as after a stolen treasure,
Hidden among the Dead & mured up from the paths of life.

The female will is Blake's symbol of man's divided nature, and appropriately, the synecdoche that symbolizes this evil is the generative organs. The female is the creature who ties the vegetative body of Christ to the mundane world; "his Maternal Humanity must be put off Eternally, / Lest the Sexual Generation swallow up regeneration" (J 737: 36-37). In this sense Blake uses the ark and tabernacle to signify the genitalia of the female. It is as a "Moony Ark" that Ololon (a sexual spirit) descends, in "clouds of blood, in streams of gore":

round his [Christ's] limbs
The Clouds of Ololon folded as a Garment dipped in blood,
Written within & without in woven letters, & the Writing
Is the Divine Revelation in the Litteral expression,
A Garment of War [the womb]. I heard it nam'd the Woof
of Six Thousand Years.⁷

⁶ J 688: 39-40. Note also J 628: 9-11 and the manuscript fragment on 188. In The Four Zoas manuscript Blake drew a triple tabernacle over the pubis of a female (cf. J 733: 17-19: "I will Create secret places . . . / A triple Female Tabernacle for Moral Law . . "). For further references to the ark and tabernacle see FZ 266: 69-71, 343: 104-106, 348: 291-293; M 502-3: 46-50, 533: 21-28; J 644: 19-21, 644: 50, 645: 29-30, 661: 29-30, 701: 68-70, 705: 11-15, 706: 42, 716: 15, 722: 26, 725: 33-34, 736: 1-13.

^o J 661: 31-35. Cf. J 724: 6-7: "Woman is caught by Pride, / That Love may only be obtain'd in the passages of Death."

[&]quot;M 534: 7-15. Note also Exodus xxxii. 15-16. Cf. Revelation xix. 13-16: Christ "was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name was called the Word of God"; he "hath on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, King of

It is "the Female Womb / In mild Jerusalem around the Lamb of God" (J 734: 52-53); "For then the Body of Death [the Ark of the Female] was perfected in hypocritic holiness, / Around the Lamb, a Female Tabernacle woven in Cathedron's Looms." ⁸

Although the tabernacle and ark are frequently used to express the attendant evils of a fallen, generative world, there are two separate and distinct threads in the symbolic tapestry that Blake wove for the tabernacle and ark, for these symbols also represent the promise of man's redemption. Perhaps the best means of separating this warp and woof is to keep in mind that the sacrifice of enemies (those outside self) is symbolized by the philosophy of chastity, whereas the sacrifice of self, or selfhood, is symbolized, in part, by the copulative act, the androgynous state of unity. This point will become more obvious as we continue, and with the ark-tabernacle-covenant symbolism in mind it should here be noted that Blake's philosophy of "Friendship," brotherhood, mutual forgiveness, and mercy and pity (a nomenclature to which Blake gives sexual connotations 10) forms a system of logic which, ultimately, derives from the Books of Moses.

Kings, and Lord of Lords." The incarnation of Christ wearing "robes of blood" is a repetitive theme in Blake's poetry (note J 724: 13-14, 697: 13-17). Blake deliberately associates the "Moony Ark" of Noah with the ark of the covenant (see

plates 24, 39, of Jerusalem).

⁸ M 494: 25-26. The dome of St. Paul's is associated with the generative aspects of the female, Cathedron's Looms, and St. Paul is connected with the "Female Will" in J 688: 42-43, possibly because of his theological views on circumcision (cf. M 512: 31-36 and J 728: 69-74). Blake opposed these views in, e. g., J 693: 30. The dome of St. Paul's appears in the background of Theotormon Woven, a pencil sketch by Blake concerning generation.

*In "The Birds," a poem dealing with sexual love, occurs the following line: "O my Lover & my Friend!" (423) In A Vision Blake notes that a "Female descends to meet her Lover or Husband, a representative of that Love, call'd

Friendship . . ." (610).

¹⁰ Blake was interested in, but had an imperfect knowledge of, Hebrew as early as 1797, and he was learning Hebrew systematically in the early part of 1803 at Felpham. Thus it is clear that he had some knowledge of Hebraic etymology. The Hebrew terms bowels, womb, and mercy (rachamim) are equated with love and pity (racham) in the original text, and in the King James Version the phrase "tender mercies" (Proverbs xii. 10) also carries the notation "Or, bowels." In the Song of Solomon, to which Blake frequently alludes, the "beloved put his hand by the hole [of the door, adds the King James Version], and my bowels were moved for him." In I John iii. 17 "bowels of compassion" are mentioned, and in I Kings iii. 26 "her bowels yearned upon his son," signifying pity. That Blake was clearly aware of these connotations, and was influenced by them, is evident from his own poetry (cf. J 648: 1-2, FZ 297: 3, J 688: 34). See also FZ 341: 19; J 667: 43, 677: 2, 647: 21. The concept of the female early is associated with "Pity"

To Blake the sexual act becomes a symbol of the covenant of Jehovah, the covenant of forgiveness (opposed to selfhood):

Pity must join together those whom wrath has torn in sunder, And the Religion of Generation, which was meant for the destruction

Of Jerusalem, become her covering till the time of the End.

O holy Generation, Image of regeneration!

O point of mutual forgiveness [the sexual organs] between Enemies [corporeal friends]!

Birthplace of the Lamb of God Incomprehensible! 11

The philosophers who weave "punishment" as a morality would make allegoric generation the "Abomination of Desolation" (J 626: 70), but the "Cherubims of Tender-mercy," the creatures above the mercy seat of the ark, are seen "Stretching their Wings sublime over the Little-ones of Albion!" (J 647: 21-22) "Why should Punishment Weave the Veil with Iron Wheels of War / When Forgiveness [the act which destroys selfhood] might it Weave with Wings of Cherubim?" (J 645: 34-35) "Mutual forgiveness of each Vice, / Such are the Gates of Paradise" begins a prologue which Blake dedicates "To the Sexes." Jerusalem, Blake's major symbol of redemption, "a City, yet a Woman" (FZ 362: 222), is a cherub-like creature whose

. . . Reins [are] cover'd with Wings [of forgiveness, not wheels of war] translucent, sometimes covering

And sometimes spread abroad, reveal the flames of holiness

Which like a robe covers & like a Veil of Seraphim

In flaming fire unceasing burns from Eternity to Eternity.¹²

Blake envisions the scene of the ark and its attendant cherubs (see his illustration, Angels Hovering Over the Body of Jesus) as the holy area symbolizing Beulah in The Four Zoas:

⁽BU 231: 13-15) by Blake. Cf. M 499: 34-35: "When wilt thou put on the Female Form as in times of old, / With a Garment of Pity & Compassion like the Garment of God?" Note also J 643: 26, 34-36.

¹¹ J 626: 62-68. Cf. J 685: 12: "... spiritual Hate, from which springs Sexual Love..." The "corporeal friends are spiritual enemies: / They saw the Sexual Religion in its embryon Uncircumcision ..." (J 655: 10-11). Also, J 652: 6-8.

¹⁸ J 731: 22-25. Cf. J 698: 2-3: The "Web / Of Ages & Generations, folding & unfolding it like a Veil of Cherubim." See Exodus xxvi. 31: "And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made."

Two winged immortal shapes, one standing at his feet
Toward the East, one standing at his head toward the west,
Their wings join'd in the Zenith over head; but other wings
They had which cloth'd their bodies like a garment of soft down,
Silvery white, shining upon the dark blue sky in silver.
Their wings touch'd the heavens; their fair feet hover'd above
The swelling tides; they bent over the dead corse [cf. GP,
italics mine] like an arch,
Pointed at top in highest heavens, of previous stones & pearl.
Such is a Vision of All Beulah hov'ring over the Sleeper.

(341: 6-15)

It is the "Divine Vision who didst create the Female to repose / The Sleepers of Beulah . . ." (M 493: 49-50). Frequently it is stated in the five books that "the Lord of hosts" is the being who "dwelleth between the Cherubim," 12 and Blake's association of Eros and Deos is resolved in this imagery concerning the ark in which the sexual act is an imaginative act of atonement (at-one-ment). "And I heard Jehovah speak / Terrific from his Holy Place [between the cherubim], & saw the Words of the Mutual Covenant Divine . . ." (J 746: 40-41, cf. Numbers vii. 89). Man will achieve his idyllic state of "Humanity" at the resurrection,

Awaking it to Life among the Flowers of Beulah, rejoicing in Unity

In the Four Senses, in the Outline, the Circumference & Form [a reference to Blake's art], for ever

In Forgiveness of Sins which is Self Annihilation; it is the Covenant of Jehovah. (J 745: 21-23)

In Jerusalem Blake states the proposition that the sexual act,

Blake speaks of the ". . . compulsory cruel Sacrifices [which] had brought Humanity into a Feminine Tabernacle [of generation] in the

¹⁸ Blake in his marginalia to Lavater's *Aphorisms* (82) refers to "Uzzah, II Sam¹ vi ch [verse 6]"; it is in verse 2 of this chapter that "the Lord of hosts... dwelleth between the cherubims." This imagery occurs frequently in the Biblical text.

¹⁴ J 678: 55-57. Cf. M 507: 12: "How long beneath the Covering Cherub give our Emanations?" Note also J 660: 41-43, M 484: 21-23, J 721: 53-56.

loins of Abraham and David," the former being the ancestor of Jacob who begat the twelve sons of Israel, the latter taking the ark to Jerusalem where it was placed in a tabernacle (1652). Here, again, it is necessary that we keep in mind the separate threads of Blake's symbolism concerning the sacrifice of enemies and the sacrifice of self. Perhaps the issue can best be pointed out by noting that Rahab, the mother of harlots, is also the whore of chastity.15 Blake's inverted logic on the matter can be seen when it is recognized that without "Chastity" the prostitute would disappear; or, to quote Blake, "Brothels [are built] with bricks of Religion." This part of Blake's mosaic frequently is misunderstood; consequently, in his "frame of reference" the religion of Rahab depends upon the rejection of the male, not acceptance. The philosophy of Rahab spreads the ideology of chastity, for in a world of "gratified desire" the whore becomes superfluous. It is in the world of fallen man that "free loves" are drawn

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into infernal bondage

That they might be born in contentions of Chastity & in Deadly Hate between Leah and Rachel, Daughters of Deceit & Fraud

Bearing the [phallic] Images of various Species of Contention And Jealousy & Abhorrence & Revenge & deadly Murder, Till they refuse liberty to the Male, & not like Beulah Where every Female delights to give her maiden to her husband. . . . (J 707: 9-15)

Blake's allusion of course is to Jacob's wives and particularly to Rachel's stealing of her family's *teraphim* or god images (see Genesis xxxi. 19 ff.), but in its larger context he is referring to the female will and its pretensions to chastity, the sacrifice of enemies.

Although Beulah is "a soft Moony Universe" 16 given in "Mercy to those who sleep" (FZ 266: 95-96), even here the contentions of chastity occur; and hence "loves"

¹⁵ Another Biblical Rahab, not to be confused with the one discussed here, was the harlot of Jericho, who helped the invading Israelites by hiding them in "stalks of flax." She identified herself by hanging a "line of scarlet thread in the window." Blake clearly utilizes both of these lines from Joshua, and in each case connects them with the generative aspects of the female (cf. FZ 356: 607, 361: 160).

¹⁶ Similar to that of Canaan. The female of Beulah creates a "moony night" with "Spaces of sweet gardens" and a "tender moon & hovering angels on the wing." In this scene the "Male gives a Time & Revolution to her Space" (J 707:

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Till they have had Punishment [chastity] enough to make them commit Crimes.

Hence rose the Tabernacle in the Wilderness & all its Offerings, From Male & Female Loves in Beulah & their Jealousies;

But no one can consummate Female bliss in Los's World [of generation] without

Becoming a Generated Mortal, a Vegetating Death.

And now the Spectres of the Dead [who have no female counterparts] awake in Beulah; all

The Jealousies become Murderous, uniting together in Rahab A Religion of Chastity....

Because of this

- ... the Infernal Veil [of the tabernacle] grows in the disobedient Female.
- Which Jesus rends 17 & the whole Druid Law [of war, sacrifice, and chastity] removes away
- From the Inner Sanctuary, 18 a False Holiness [the Decalogue] hid within the Center [the ark].
- For the Sanctuary of Eden is in the Camp, in the Outline, In the Circumference, & every Minute Particular is Holy: Embraces are Cominglings from Head even to the Feet,¹⁹ And not a pompous High Priest entering by a Secret Place.²⁰

Blake in exploiting his imagery of the religion of chastity and its

19-23). Cf. The Crystal Cabinet (429) in which the "cabinet" opens into a "lovely Moony Night." Cf. FZ 350: 370-371, 351: 394-395; M 489: 44, 490-1: 3-10; J 642: 40-47.

¹⁷ Blake frequently dwells on the point that "the Saviour born & dying rends" the veil of generation (J686: 16). In part, Blake's allusion is to Matthew xxvii. 50-51 (repeated in Mark and Luke) in which Jesus "yielded up the ghost" and "the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." The veil here, as the King James Version suggests, is the veil of cherubim mentioned in Exodus.

¹⁸ The Holy of Holies beyond the veil of the tabernacle was where the ark rested (Exodus xxvi. 34); the veil was to hang between the holy place and the most holy place (Exodus xxvi. 33).

¹⁰ The allusion is to Paradise Lost, VIII, 620-629.

²⁰ J 707-8: 26-44. Once a year the high priest entered the holiest place of the tabernacle and sprinkled the blood of a sacrificed bullock on the mercy seat (Leviticus xvi.2, 13-17). Cf. J 701: 59-61: "For a Spectre has no Emanation but what he imbibes from deceiving / A Victim: Then he becomes her Priest & she his Tabernacle / And his Oak Grove...."

sacrifice of enemies associates the ark and tabernacle with Druidic Albion. He conceives of Stonehenge as a monstrous extension of the ark and its propitiatory rites. Stonehenge is the place of sacrifice for one's enemies, a place of murder and unforgiving; "The Building is Natural Religion & its Altars Natural Morality. . . ." In this "stupendous Building on the Plain of Salisbury," where "Rocks [are] piled on rocks," Vala is seen "turning the iron Spindle of destruction," the iron wheel of war, and "Her Two Covering Cherubs" are "Two frowning Rocks on each side of the Cove & Stone of Torture, 21 / Frozen Sons of the Feminine Tabernacle . . ." (J 701-2: 2-14).

The above imagery is especially important, not only for its use of the Pentateuch but also for providing a clue to one of Blake's most enigmatic passages in *Jerusalem* (plate 1):

There is a Void outside of Existence, which if enter'd into Englobes itself & becomes a Womb; such was Albion's Couch, A pleasant Shadow of Repose call'd Albion's lovely Land.²² His Sublime & Pathos ²³ become *Two Rocks* fix'd in the Earth; His reason, his *Spectrous Power*, covers them above. Jerusalem his Emanation is a *Stone laying beneath*. (620, italics mine)

The first three lines of this passage need not concern us beyond the fact that they have specific associations with the tabernacle and that the lines are concerned with generation, the couch and "Door of Death" (620). Joseph Wicksteed in William Blake's Jerusalem (page 107) has correctly noted that part of this imagery has reference to the Druidic (so Blake thought) dolmens, but he does not pursue the full import of the symbolism nor does he note the connection with the ark. The Two Rocks would appear to be a symbolic reference to the cherubim of the ark, and specifically refer to the two upright stones of a Stonehenge trilithon. The "Spectrous Power" probably symbolizes the presence of Jehovah above the ark and refers, literally, to the lintel stone lying across the uprights. Jehovah's presence above the ark, a spectrous shadow, is manifested by the cover of a cloud by

²¹ Cf. Exodus xxxvii. 8.

³³ Blake mentions "the Couch of Death" in M 522: 39-40 and notes that "God himself enters Death's Door." This "Death Couch of Albion" becomes a "Womb" in M 534: 1, and in M 502-3: 44-48 the couch of death is "a tabernacle." See also *The Crystal Cabinet*, in which the "golden" cabinet contains "Another England."

³⁸ The male and female, as the passage in J 736: 8-13 documents.

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day and a fire by night, and Blake quotes this imagery of Exodus in Jerusalem (731: 27).24 The "Stone laying beneath" the trilithon—if the analogy is continued—would be the "Druidic" altar stone (a mercy seat!) of Stonehenge, the recumbent stone surrounded by trilithons. This is the "Stone of Torture" (illustrated several times in Stukeley—see below), and the priestesses with "Knives of flint" cut asunder the sacrificial victim's "inner garments" (J 702: 26-27). Blake's association of Stonehenge with the tabernacle and ark is not a capricious element of his symbolism. It is known that William Stukeley's researches into Druidic lore influenced Blake, and in his Stonehenge: A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids (1740) the Stonehenge sacrifices are said to be "deriv'd from the Mosaic dispensation . . ." and to follow the "Hebrew rite" (page 34). Stukeley further points out that the Druids practiced chastity before officiating and that their worship was based upon the patriarchal religion of Abraham.25

When the Druids demanded chastity "all was lost":

How can the Female be Chaste, O thou stupid Druid, Cried Los Without the Forgiveness of Sins in the merciful clouds of Jehovah

And without the Baptism of Repentance to wash away Calumnies and

The Accusations of Sin, that each may be Pure in their Neighbours' sight? (J 697: 26-29)

²⁴ In J723: 48-56 Rahab becomes an ironic and feminine perversion of Jehovah, a "hovering cloud" above the "Serpent Temple," which Blake connected with Stonehenge. Cf. J743: 17-29.

²⁶ Stukeley, pp. 55, 54. Blake engraved striking designs of Stonehenge in five plates of Milton and Jerusalem, and we need not question the importance of the monument in his symbolism. Peculiarly he speaks of Stonehenge as being constructed from "unhewn stones of Eden" (1701: 1-2), and in Europe and elsewhere the dolmens are described as "massy stones, uncut / With tool. . " (241: 7-8). It was well known in Blake's time that tools were used to fashion Stonehenge; Stukeley (page 66) specifically states that chisels were used on this "temple," whereas other "Druidic" monuments were "untouch'd of tool, exactly after the patriarchal and Jewish mode. . . ." Blake, in this instance, either misinterpreted or ignored Stukeley's volumes on Stonehenge and Avebury. Most probably, however, he is extending the imagery of Deuteronomy xxvii. When the Israelites passed over Jordan they set up on Mt. Ebal an altar of "great stones" upon which the laws of Israel were written. This altar was untouched with "iron tool." The generative daughters of Zelophehad (whom Blake associated with the Druids) in Jerusalem (705: 3-9) bind down their sacrificial victim "on Ebal, Mount of cursing." Blake associates Stonehenge with the stone altar of Mt. Ebal, from which curses were to be pronounced upon those who committed sin. Cf. also J 740: 24-25 and Hebrews x. 3-6.

In the mundane world mutual forgiveness can be turned into "Chastity," and

. . . the affectionate touch of the tongue [i. e., the flesh] is clos'd by the deadly teeth [the vagina dententa], 26
And the soft smile 27 of friendship [between lovers] & the open dawn of [mutual] benevolence

Become a net & a trap, & every energy render'd cruel, Till the existence of friendship & benevolence is denied: The wine of the Spirit & the vineyards of the Holy-One Here turn into poisonous stupor & deadly intoxication.

(J672:24-29)

"By Laws of Chastity & Abhorrence" man is

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Striving to create a Heaven in which all shall be pure & holy In their Own Selfhoods: in Natural Selfish Chastity to banish Pity

And dear Mutual Forgiveness, & to become One Great Satan. . . . 28

The act of sex in its imaginative form is "Jerusalem in every Man / A Tent & Tabernacle of Mutual Forgiveness, Male & Female Clothings" (J 684: 3-4); and it symbolizes the annihilation of the selfhood. It is Jesus who "Opens Eternity in Time & Space [male and female], triumphant in Mercy" (J 716: 21-22). As Blake observes, "... mercy is not a Sin, / Nor pity nor love nor kind forgiveness" (J 643: 24-25).

Blake told Crabb Robinson "that the fall produced only generation and death," and, as Robinson records, Blake then "went off upon a rambling state of the union of sexes in man as in Ovid, an androgynous state. . . ." The tabernacle, symbolizing the place of generation, represents the fall into selfhood in which enemies—formerly the friends of

²⁰ Cf. J 723: 69: "she hid his tongue with teeth." Note also M 481: 10-12 where Jesus becomes "prey" to the "False Tongue" and "its sacrifices and / Its offerings."

²⁷ In "The Golden Net" (424) it is "a Smile / That did Heaven itself beguile, / [and] Bore the Golden Net [of generation] aloft. . . ." Cf. J 643: 30-32. In "The Mental Traveller" (426) "The bread & wine of her sweet smile, . . . / Does him to Infancy beguile."

²⁸ J 679: 25-30, italics mine. Cf. M 530: 1-2: "... Till All Things become One Great Satan [the apostle of Chastity], in Holiness / Oppos'd to Mercy and the Divine Delusion, Jesus, be no more." Jesus is the "soft delusion of Eternity" (FZ 273: 337), and in another, but related sense, the term delusion is a frequent synonym for the generative act in Blake's poetry (M 494: 39; J 639: 25-28, 640: 11-12, 721: 76-80, 725: 4-5, 730: 30-32).

unity-take on the pride of self, bearing their separate and generative teraphim:

- Humanity [unified man] knows not of Sex: wherefore are Sexes [i. e., the separated, sexus] in Beulah?
- In Beulah the Female lets down her beautiful Tabernacle
- Which the Male enters magnificent between her Cherubim [to the mercy seat]
- And becomes One with her, mingling, condensing in Self-love
- The Rocky Law of Condemnation [stones of testimony] & double Generation & Death.
- Albion hath enter'd the Loins, the place of the Last Judgement,
- And Luvah ²⁰ hath drawn the Curtains [the veil of the tabernacle] around Albion in Vala's bosom.
- The Dead [ungenerated] awake to Generation! Arise O Lord, & rend the Veil! 30

The feminine tabernacle of offerings, or "place of blood" as Blake refers to it in his manuscript (176), like Rahab's religion of chastity, will disappear when man, through the fibres of brotherhood, attains his primal unity. The androgyne has no need for images of generation. It is fitting that Blake substitutes "the Cross in place of the Ark, with the two Cherubim bowing over it" (444) in his great pictorial vision of *The Last Judgment*. Presumably, his alteration of the traditional iconography of this scene was to emphasize that holiness concerns the sacrifice of the selfhood (the mysterious offering of self, the crucifixion) rather than the sacrifice of enemies, symbolized by the tabernacle and ark. It is in eternity that "I forgive you, you forgive me," but this can come about only when the "Infernal Grove" is rooted up and corporeal love (with its implications of chastity) rejected (417).

The sexual act of unity, however, is symbolic of regeneration and redemption:

For Man cannot unite with Man but by their Emanations Which stand both Male & Female at the Gates of each Humanity. How then can I ever again be united as Man with Man

²⁹ I. e. love, possibly derived from lufa, the Anglo-Saxon word for love.

⁸⁰ J 656: 33-40. Christ overturns the "Tent of Secret Sins [the tabernacle], / & its Golden cords & Pins—/ 'Tis the Bloody Shrine of War [the womb] / Pinn'd around from Star to Star . . ." (EG: 756-7: 21-24). It is also the uterine net of religion that hangs suspended in the void: "the Web vibrated strong / From heaven to heaven, from globe to globe" (FZ 319-20: 318-319).

While thou, my Emanation, refusest my Fibres of dominion? [the rejection of which forms the Tabernacle of the Wilderness]

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When Souls mingle & join thro all the Fibres of Brotherhood Can there be any secret joy on Earth greater than this? 32

On the final pages of *Jerusalem*, Blake's last great poetic testament, he envisions the importance of "brotherhood":

And the Bow is a Male & Female, & the Quiver of the Arrows of Love

Are the Children of this Bow, a Bow of Mercy & Loving-kindness laying

Open the hidden Heart in Wars of mutual Benevolence, Wars of Love:

And the Hand of Man grasps firm between the Male & Female Loves. (744: 12-15)

Blake's "Divine Analogy" intimately was connected with the Mosaic text of the Five Books ³² and such symbolism was a purposeful and significant element in his egocentric philosophy. Blake's highly anagogical pursuit of the generative equation is not a shallow tropism, and the profound and extensive influence that the Pentateuch had upon his imagery must be considered in any exegesis of his poetry as it is a fundamental source for his inspiration.

⁸¹ J 733: 10-15. Cf. J 622: 7-8: "I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine: / Fibres of love from man to man thro' Albion's pleasant land." Note also FZ 345: 158-160, 326-7: 270-273.

³² Blake returns to this theme in J 680: 51-58: "The Sun shall go before you in Day, the Moon shall go / Before you in Night." Jehovah is "Building the Body of Moses in the Valley of [Beth] Peor, the Body / Of Divine Analogy. . . ." Moses was buried in Bethpeor, the area accorded to Reuben, in the land of Moab. Cf. M 500: 6-14.

Book Reviews

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Mark Twain-Howells Letters: The Correspondence of Samuel L. Clemens and William D. Howells, 1872-1910, ed. Henry Nash Smith and William M. Gibson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2 vols., 1960. Pp. xxv + 948. \$20.00.

Stephen Crane: Letters, ed. R. W. Stallman and Lillian Gilkes. New York: New York University Press, 1960. Pp. xxx + 366. \$6.50.

The story unfolded, revealed in the letters of Howells and Mark Twain may not be "the saddest story," but it is the saddest one I have read for a long time. I should say "experienced," not "read," for the story is not so much told as hinted, suggested, reported, and analyzed-by the participants. Much of the action occurs offstage: we hear about the events, we seem to hear distant cries, we read Mark Twain's report and comment and Howells's sympathetic response.

As James said he wanted to do, these letters make us imagine.

What we imagine is sad almost without relief, certainly with no final uplift in the manner of classic tragic drama; sad to the end, the saddest of all at the end, desolating. Everything, we finally come to feel, every hope and plan, almost every creative effort even (I am speaking now of the impression we have as we finish the two large volumes, not in strict, exact terms: Huckleberry Finn is far in the past)-everything has run out, disappeared, evaporated, faded, died. The eagerly planned trips have never been taken, the promised visits never made, the much discussed books never written.

The energies have been misapplied, the hopes misplaced. For years Mark Twain has been trying to get out of the literary business: would have long since if he had made the millions he hoped to make by the typesetter. Wanting above all to be rich, he achieved his second fortune only after it was too late to enjoy it-too many of those he loved were gone by then. So he builds Stormfield and

plays billiards far into the night.

The triumphs-chiefly Huckleberry Finn-came without foresight or understanding, or even full realization afterward of what had been done. The creative satisfactions they brought were fleeting, and as they faded into the past-a past that came to seem less and less real, like someone else's past-they were the source not of continued satisfaction but of discontent, for they could not be repeated. Along with many other memories, they became symbols of loss-lost power, lost happiness, lost innocence and youth.

No wonder Mark Twain asked "What is man?" and replied in despair so bitter that his answer was incoherent. His "philosophizing" toward the end of his life is of course not significant as philosophy. It is an anguished cry from the heart. But it has its own emotional coherence and meaning, and seems, at least to this reader of the letters, entirely fitting and proper, in view of all the

circumstances.

The despair of Mark Twain's later years is often referred to by scholars as though it could be accounted for simply in terms of peculiar misfortunes of Mark Twain's—the deaths of several of those most dear to him before his own—and had no relevance to the common human destiny. There are many stratagems by which the self protects itself from awareness of what it cannot bear to know, and this is a scholarly version of one of them. The impression I had as I finished these letters is, as I said, that this was the saddest story, but also that, in a very real and fundamental sense, it was and is man's story. Like a well-written novel, the letters motivate, prepare us for, and finally make us share and agree with the interpretations, the meanings, they culminate in. I do not, thank God, in my ordinary, everyday, working self share Mark Twain's religious beliefs: but within the context in which he had to think—the only context there was for him—I do not see how he could have thought otherwise.

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His nihilism has therefore not only the dignity of being one possible honest reaction to life—so many philosophies and theologies are patently *not* honest but only transparent stratagems—but of being, so far as I can see, the only possible fully honest one for him. Apart from the consolation of religious faith, what significant mitigation of the tragedy of the human situation is there? Mark Twain was too sensitive to be unaware of tragedy, and too honest to deny what his experience seemed to imply. Religious faith as he knew it seemed ruled out by the best modern thought. He was too intelligent—even if no philosopher—to share the mindless optimism of those consoled by the notion of "progress," even though he was a firm believer in progress.

What was left as a real possibility was despair. Those who would dismiss his negations as a mere idiosyncracy had better have some good answers ready, not to the superficial determinism and materialism of his attempts at philosophy but to the meanings implicit in his life, as revealed in these letters.

Apart from such impressions as these, I am not aware of having learned anything new from reading these volumes—with one exception, and that concerns Howells, not Mark Twain. Of course there is a great deal of factual information here that I had not known before—and for the most part cannot recall now. It is always there where and when we need it: the volumes are magnificently edited, a triumph of taste and tact and scholarship. What I mean when I say that I learned nothing new is that apart from details of biography which I have neither the ability nor even the desire to remember, no new picture of Mark Twain emerges, no surprising revelation of how he produced his books or what he meant by them or what he was like as a person. Most of the essential facts about Mark Twain are apparently already known. What is lacking, where anything is lacking, is only an adequate response and interpretation. The story has been fully told. What does it mean?

The exception I mentioned above to the statement that I didn't learn anything in the course of the moving experience of reading straight through these volumes is this: I had not realized the extent to which Howells shared Mark Twain's point of view—even, in a sense, his despair. (But Howells was so much more controlled, poised, "mature," prudential a man than Mark Twain that in him it never quite comes to despair. He knows very well what Mark Twain means, but he is determined himself not to feel that emotion, and he arranges not to.) My Mark Twain, it would seem, is not wholly candid: or let us say that its

voice is that of the official Howells, editor, popular novelist, academician, dean of American letters. In it Howells gives Mark Twain the highest possible praise, even overstating his achievement as a writer and the universality of his genius; but also carefully dissociating himself from Mark Twain's point of view, his unpopular "errors" of philosophy.

I do not suppose we need to assume any conscious hypocrisy on Howells's part: rather, that he lived different roles and spoke in different voices. But the letters make the hearty tone of the book ring pretty hollow. Obviously Howells was trying to cheer somebody up, himself or the public or both. The conclusion with its emotionally charged theistic language from one who had long since given up theism—"the Mystery," "the Searcher of hearts," "the God who"—comes close to being cant. If it is saved from seeming so, it is only because we feel Howells was overwrought by the intensity and genuineness of his grief for his friend.

What the letters show us is that not only did the family experiences run more or less parallel but the interpretations of them, and of life in general, were following parallel courses, too. There is a very dark tinge to Howells's naturalism in the later years, darker than I had realized. He buried himself in activity, writing novel after novel on a tight schedule, busying himself with good works and causes—all, it would seem, to ward off despair. If he succeeded in avoiding it, as I guess he did, it was surely by a narrow margin; and in its place he suffered what is perhaps less agonizing but also less heroic, simple depression. He was the perfect friend for Mark Twain even though—and here the letters simply confirm what we already knew—less great both as a writer and as a man.

The other volume of letters assigned to me for comment is much less interesting, and I shall deal with it briefly. Stephen Crane is a minor writer beside Mark Twain, and even beside Howells. And not only a lesser writer but a far lesser man than either of them. Mark Twain has genius; Howells has a deep and wide-ranging intelligence and responsiveness; Crane has a certain talent, an ability to dramatize himself, a certain freshness and originality, both in his person and in his works. He wrote several things that are quite fine. But I doubt that he would have done anything as good again if he had lived longer.

His untimely death makes him a romantic figure. But the defects in most of his works may be related to the ignorance, the empty and rather childish poses and *chic* rebellions we see in the letters. When we read the letters of Mark Twain and Howells we are in the world of Job and Oedipus and the crucifixion; when we read Stephen Crane our horizons contract to the negations of the 1890's. Methodism becomes an issue, and temperance and cigarette smoking become moral problems, and fraternities loom large. It is simply a different world from what we have been in, smaller, less significant. The light these letters throw on Crane does not enhance his stature.

There is, though, one connection between these two works. Mark Twain, Howells, Crane—all defined man in fundamentally similar terms. All broke off the question "What is man?" without completing it—"that Thou art mindful of him." Crane was probably the most "humanistic" in the modern sense, Howells the most pragmatic, Mark Twain, at least on the level of conscious, rational thought, the most mechanistic and materialistic and so, from our point of view, the least defensible. But he was also, I think, despite his extremely emotional

negations, the one closest to the sources of any really viable affirmation. His despair must be taken seriously, as we cannot take Crane's puerile rebellions.

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From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse, ed. Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958. Pp. ix + 326. \$5.75.

At an informal meeting someone once questioned Dylan Thomas on "the richer levels of meanings" in poetry, whereupon he exclaimed: "Oh God, isn't an education wonderful!" Seeing his questioner rather put out, he hastened to explain that he had meant it as a compliment for "saying things so well." Perhaps one has a somewhat similar reaction to this volume of essays. It is wonderful; there is genuine pleasure at finding so much of substance and worth and at having it said so well. Still, some pieces do deserve a muted "Oh God!"

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If one regards the essays in this collection as a fair cross-section of modern scholarship and criticism, as seems reasonable, one is heartened by the fact that no critical dogma dominates, but that, rather, the critic's individual vision and imaginative (as well as affectionate) hold of his material lead again and again to an enlargement of our understanding. Should one nevertheless dare single out one strain from such plenty, the best results seem to accrue from looking at the

major characters with redoubled care-and often at those that were thought to be uncomplicated-and from noting the specific attitudes the authors display toward them. None of the more interesting characters is a paragon; rather, each has to stand trial, as it were, during the course of the novel for the author's changing and slowly hardening opinion of him. David Daiches' essay on Scott's Redgauntlet illustrates this well. He shows how Scott was "concerned with the mutations of heroism" and how he set himself the task of working out "the validity and implications of different attitudes toward Scotland's past and present." The same may be said for W. Y. Tindall's discussion of Conrad's Marlow, whose "sentimental irony" and "middle-aged nostalgia" embody Conrad's crucial comments on "the Victorian gentleman." It may be characteristic of the modern view that characters in novels are seen not so much as creations, with the novelist as creator making his omniscent presence felt now through one, now through another of his "children," addressing the reader with explanations of what he was doing or aiming to do, but rather as a knowing manipulator of instruments, who at best smartly exploits the full range and depth of each. Fortunately, such a mechanistic view, laying excessive stress on technique, is, as I have said, more often than not tempered by a genuine and quite personal affection for the given

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It is not difficult to isolate the less rewarding critical approaches if one maintains that above all the novel itself be served. Discussions of the author's philosophical position, or a search into the accuracy of historical matters used by him, or a search into the "originals" of certain characters, or again an unconsummated tracing of influence—these are undeniably interesting in Arnold's sense, but one cannot help feeling that the critic's job of judging wisely is evaded (or merely postponed?) and that the blurring of a line between two disciplines obviously blurs each. Some contributors proceed as though the major unfinished business of modern criticism consisted in demonstrating that a given novelist was more existential than he or his readers knew him to be. Reservations may also be made about the introductory essay, which outlines the development of the novel in earlier centuries: this has been done many times and in any case would be more

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The picture of the novel, finally, that emerges from those more probing pieces is a novel palpitant with ideas, with causes, with "having something to say." There are indirect reminders that the courage to say the obvious often leads to the tellingly individual. Two important concerns stand out: the reworking of history into dramatic immediacy (possibly as a bulwark against scientific encroachments upon an orderly universe) and the extent of man's obligations to his fellow-man. Again, the critics implicitly agree that experimentation with the form of the novel was sparse, that its success lay with the manifold exploration of a form. It is as though the self-assurance generated by having a sizable, devoted reading public provided the novelists with Lebensraum which they knew what to do with. If it made some a trifle smug and condescending, it enabled others to raise the novel to the dominant genre. We have to thank the editors and the contributors for their efforts in presenting the novel as a product of abundance and in reminding us that it merits our continued admiration for a purposeful harnessing of that abundance.

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James Douglas Bruce's two-volume Evolution of Arthurian Romance appeared in 1923. It was a monumental task, the painstakingly thorough result of many years of studying and teaching Medieval literature in general and the Arthurian legend in particular. In its encouragement of further and accelerated study of Arthurian literature, Bruce's work no doubt hastened its own obsolescence; from only a few years after its publication scholars have lamented that no one has undertaken to revise it and bring it abreast of the scholarship that it encouraged. Professor R. S. Loomis's Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, despite its importance and its considerable merit, will probably not be thought by many to fulfill this need.

As its subtitle states, this is a "collaborative" history, comprised of forty-one essays by thirty hands, on subjects ranging from the historicity of Arthur, through the labyrinthine development of a literature centering around that hero and his knights, to the influence of the material upon spectacle and sport during the middle ages. It invites, of course, precisely the criticism that a collaborative history would invite, and precisely that which Professor Loomis anticipates in his Prologue: "Single authorship, if it were possible, would have produced greater consistency and cohesion and better proportioning." But if it is not quite fair to criticize the whole of the work in terms of defects which are clearly

voice is that of the official Howells, editor, popular novelist, academician, dean of American letters. In it Howells gives Mark Twain the highest possible praise, even overstating his achievement as a writer and the universality of his genius; but also carefully dissociating himself from Mark Twain's point of view, his unpopular "errors" of philosophy.

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I do not suppose we need to assume any conscious hypocrisy on Howells's part: rather, that he lived different roles and spoke in different voices. But the letters make the hearty tone of the book ring pretty hollow. Obviously Howells was trying to cheer somebody up, himself or the public or both. The conclusion with its emotionally charged theistic language from one who had long since given up theism—"the Mystery," "the Searcher of hearts," "the God who"—comes close to being cant. If it is saved from seeming so, it is only because we feel Howells was overwrought by the intensity and genuineness of his grief for his friend.

What the letters show us is that not only did the family experiences run more or less parallel but the interpretations of them, and of life in general, were following parallel courses, too. There is a very dark tinge to Howells's naturalism in the later years, darker than I had realized. He buried himself in activity, writing novel after novel on a tight schedule, busying himself with good works and causes—all, it would seem, to ward off despair. If he succeeded in avoiding it, as I guess he did, it was surely by a narrow margin; and in its place he suffered what is perhaps less agonizing but also less heroic, simple depression. He was the perfect friend for Mark Twain even though—and here the letters simply confirm what we already knew—less great both as a writer and as a man.

The other volume of letters assigned to me for comment is much less interesting, and I shall deal with it briefly. Stephen Crane is a minor writer beside Mark Twain, and even beside Howells. And not only a lesser writer but a far lesser man than either of them. Mark Twain has genius; Howells has a deep and wide-ranging intelligence and responsiveness; Crane has a certain talent, an ability to dramatize himself, a certain freshness and originality, both in his person and in his works. He wrote several things that are quite fine. But I doubt that he would have done anything as good again if he had lived longer.

His untimely death makes him a romantic figure. But the defects in most of his works may be related to the ignorance, the empty and rather childish poses and *chic* rebellions we see in the letters. When we read the letters of Mark Twain and Howells we are in the world of Job and Oedipus and the crucifixion; when we read Stephen Crane our horizons contract to the negations of the 1890's. Methodism becomes an issue, and temperance and cigarette smoking become moral problems, and fraternities loom large. It is simply a different world from what we have been in, smaller, less significant. The light these letters throw on Crane does not enhance his stature.

There is, though, one connection between these two works. Mark Twain, Howells, Crane—all defined man in fundamentally similar terms. All broke off the question "What is man?" without completing it—"that Thou art mindful of him." Crane was probably the most "humanistic" in the modern sense, Howells the most pragmatic, Mark Twain, at least on the lèvel of conscious, rational thought, the most mechanistic and materialistic and so, from our point of view, the least defensible. But he was also, I think, despite his extremely emotional

negations, the one closest to the sources of any really viable affirmation. His despair must be taken seriously, as we cannot take Crane's puerile rebellions.

HYATT H. WAGGONER

Brown University

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anticipated, frankly acknowledged, and well nigh inevitable, there is a great deal that needs to be said about its separate parts—so much, in fact, that probably no single review will do complete justice to either the merits or the faults of even

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One aspect of the world of Arthurian scholarship which probably even the most casual reader will not fail to see reflected in these essays is the fact that it is often as competitive and sometimes as acrimonious as many aspects of the modern business world. These qualities are usually muted by being relegated to footnotes, true enough; but they are nevertheless very real and more often than not their effect is to deteriorate an argument rather than enhance it. To cite but one of many examples, in the first essay, "The Arthur of History," Professor K. H. Jackson identifies some of Arthur's battle sites described in Nennius's Historia Brittonum. Then, referring in a footnote to F. Lot's previous identifications, Jackson comments that where these differ from his own, "they are worth-

less, like all Lot's essays in Celtic philology" (p. 4).

Another aspect of Arthurian scholarship that the reader will quickly discover is the marked degree to which it often indulges in sheer speculation. Given a literature more of which is probably lost than survives, this will excite little surprise, but the results are sometimes startling. Following a proposal of H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, Jackson notes that Nennius's version of the Arthur story is likely to have its source in Welsh lore, and he calls attention to several early Welsh "catalogue" poems which are more closely parallel with Nennius than that cited originally by the Chadwicks. However speculative, this is an interesting and highly plausible hypothesis in solving the perplexing question of Nennius's sources; it was fairly generally accepted as such when the Chadwicks advanced it, and Jackson's additional evidence should certainly bolster its probability. To go further, however, and try to explain such details as the number (960) of warriors killed by Arthur in the battle of Guinnion, requires a compounding of hypothesis that rests on ground as quick-sandy as that of Vortigern's attempted castle-building at Dinas Emrys. No one interested in Arthurian literature will object greatly to a scholar's posing an "X" source where no other explanation is available (though the possibility of invention is too regularly ignored), but perhaps the further assumption of a writer's hypothetical misreading of his hypothetical source verges too far into the realm of ingenuity. It is through just such a process, at any rate, that Jackson accounts for Nennius's assigning 960 as the number of Arthur's victims:

It is probable therefore that Nennius had before him a written text, or knew an oral version, of a Welsh poem cataloguing Arthur's deeds in similar vein. . . . Indeed the figure 960 looks very like a corruption of the sort of number that was traditional in Welsh eulogistic verse; 120 was commonly the size of a chief's war-band, and an army consisting of three such bands would be quite natural. The British army of Gododdin is given usually as 300, or 300 with 3 chiefs, i.e. 3 war-bands of 100 plus a leader. Probably the original figure was dececix, 3 times 303, misread by Nennius as dececlx. (p. 7)

Ironically, Jackson can say of another's argument on a different point that it was an idea "ingeniously urged by Collingwood, in an argument which it would be an understatement to call 'imaginative'" (p. 9).

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An occasional acrimonious footnote, however, or for that matter a sometimes highly speculative argument, will probably trouble very little the fairly specialized audience of Arthurian scholars for whom this book is primarily intended. More troublesome will be what seems to me the generally extreme partisanship of the book. As its greatest single contributor, Professor Loomis himself has argued in several books and numerous articles that the Arthur legend springs ultimately from Celtic lore-" a flourishing body of tradition, both oral and written, of which Arthur had become the central figure by 1100 at latest" (p. 52). This is well and good, of course, and perfectly consistent with the whole of Loomis's long and distinguished career in Arthurian scholarship. But to judge from his essays here, or from the fact that none of the other contributors gives any indication of dissenting very seriously from the theory of Celtic origins (especially of the Grail legend), one would scarcely guess that there are other thriving theories (Christian and Ritual origins) which also have distinguished and persuasive adherents. J. D. Bruce was as dedicated to the theory of Christian origin as Loomis is to the Celtic theory; but in his work we find a presentation of the alternatives which is, if not entirely impartial, at least informative and reasonably fair in its thoroughness.

The controversy over the origins of the Arthur story is an old one, of course; more immediately indicative of the partisanship which seems to me to characterize the book is Professor Vinaver's essay on Sir Thomas Malory (pp. 541-552). In his edition of the Winchester MS of the Morte Darthur (The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, 3 vols., Oxford, 1947), Vinaver argued that Malory conceived and wrote his "works" as separate romances, with no intention that these should be construed as forming a unified narrative—as, in fact, the book had been construed from Caxton's time to the publication of the Winchester MS. Vinaver does little more than restate that argument here, dismissing a very considerable body of scholarly objection with the casual comment that

recent critics have tried to revert to the notion of the organic unity of the collection as a whole, only to find themselves ignoring not only Malory's explicit statements and Caxton's implied admissions . . . , but the fact that the whole of the middle portion . . . is unrelated to any of the themes which occur before or after. (p. 544)

The fact of the matter is that these critics have not "ignored" any of the evidence upon which Vinaver's case is built; they have simply interpreted that evidence in other, and to me, sounder ways.

Though one hesitates to be too picayunish in dealing with a work of this size and scope, there are also in the book a good number of petty annoyances which should have been eliminated at some stage of the proof-reading. On p. 140 we find an awkward agreement: "The emotional vigour of Béroul's account are consequent upon the style that he has adopted." Footnotes on pp. 134, 135, and 327 erroneously refer to notes on pp. 121 and 261 instead of 122 and 325 respectively. One looks in vain for any mention of "Dinas Emreis" on (or near) p. 43, where, according to the index, it should be found.

Despite all this, the book contains some very fine and useful essays. Professor Helaine Newstead is, as usual, beautifully terse and thorough in her statement of the growth of the Tristan legend (pp. 122-133); given the vigor of the many

controversies centering around the life, work, and influence of Chrétien de Troyes, Professor Frappier's essay (pp. 157-191) is carefully reserved and—except for his neglect of U. T. Holmes, Jr.—eminently fair; Professor Ackerman's essay on the Middle English rimed and prose romances (pp. 480-519) will be particularly helpful in directing attention again to a segment of Arthurian romance that has not received its due share of scholarly attention for several years.

On the whole, then, Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages is uneven. If we bear in mind the fact that it is a "collaborative history," much must be forgiven, and I am sure that I have not given its many merits the positive emphasis they deserve. On the other hand, the book is, as I see it, primarily a "collaborative history"; and from this point of view it seems to me that the individual collaborators are all too prone to overlook entirely the conflicting theories of other reputable scholars. The reader is entitled to know, in other words, that a great many of the matters treated here are not settled—that they are, instead, highly debatable and much debated. Further, he is entitled to know what the alternative theories are and where to find fuller statements of them. This is already a very large book, but the kind of thing I am thinking of would often have required little more than the usual scholarly open-mindedness of a footnote beginning, "For an opposite view, see. . . ."

T. C. RUMBLE

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The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance by Alvin Kernan. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959. Pp. x + 261. \$5.00.

Elizabethan satire is a more important subject than it might at first seem to one not particularly concerned with it. Critical theory and literary history apart, the pamphlets of Nashe and Martin Marprelate and the comedies of Jonson remain simply delightful, and the verse satires of Donne and of Hall are at least respectable. Elizabethan dramatic and prose satire has assumed special importance for critical theory since its connection with the rise of capitalism has been made the subject of what is perhaps the outstanding example of Marxist criticism in English, L. C. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1936). For literary history Elizabethan satire has seemed one of the clearest symptoms of the change in temper between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Alvin Kernan's book, The Cankered Muse, is a description of the accepted corpus of Elizabethan satire in terms of its author's theory of satire, with little attention to the sociological or cultural significance of that corpus. Kernan's theory of satire is simple, clear, and neatly expounded. Like the majority of modern critics, Kernan slights Dryden's distinction between gentle Horatian and savage Juvenalian satire and takes the latter as the norm. Unlike his most immediate predecessors, John Peter, Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (1956), and James Sutherland, English Satire (1958), he does not attempt to divide the more sophisticated and literary satire from the direct and primitive complaint or denunciation, but defines the genre simply as "attack" and accepts

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the whole range. Satire thus defined, its three elements are then discussed. "The scene of satire," Kernan says, "is always disorderly and crowded," and he cites Juvenal's Rome, Langland's "felde ful of folke," Jonson's, Pope's, and Hogarth's Londons, Nathanael West's Los Angeles, etc. The satirist is the "I" of formal satire or a point-of-view character like Gulliver or a vehicle for invective like Thersites; in any case he is a "mask," distinct from the author, and his character is determined by the artistic demands of the genre. The plot of satire, unlike those of comedy and tragedy, does not progress; the satiric scene remains unchanged, always crowded with fools and villains, and the satirist remains indignant at it from beginning to end. In terms of these elements Kernan distinguishes formal satire, in which the satirist stands apart from the scene, from Menippean satire, in which the satirist merges with the scene or disappears altogether. Simple as it is, this is the most complete theory of satire yet presented, and it proves rather effective when applied to the literature of the Renaissance.

Thus Kernan describes the traditional English satirist as using the mask of the plowman, the simple, honest preacher indignant about social evils. Under the influence of the classics and for "complex causes . . . beyond the scope of this work," a new type of satire appeared in the late sixteenth century in which the satirist used the mask of a railing malcontent. Renaissance critical theory wrongly supposed "satire" to be derived from "satyr," and the rough quality of late Elizabethan formal verse satires, especially Marston's, is a result of the

satirist's envisioning his malcontent spokesman as satyr-like.

It should be pointed out that Kernan's most important achievement in this description is clarity of exposition: he says almost nothing new. The plowman tradition of satire was worked out by Helen White, he satirical malcontent pose is common knowledge, and Kernan's discussion of Elizabethan critical theories of satire owes an unacknowledged debt to O. J. Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (1938). Kernan's description is neater and clearer than that in the chapter on satire in Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry (1952), but it comes to essentially the same thing. And Smith is briefer and does not omit the complex causes. Perhaps the one new thing in Kernan's account is the degree of emphasis placed on the connection between "satire" and "satyr"; but this is probably excessive, and it causes the author to pass over hurriedly important satirists like Donne and Lodge in whom the connection is not apparent.

Completing his discussion of verse satire, Kernan turns to the theatre and describes the absorption of formal satire into the drama and the dramatic use of the railing malcontent satirist. The plays discussed include Histriomastix, What You Will, Every Man Out, Volpone, The Alchemist (on which Kernan's criticism seemed to me most interesting), Troilus, Timon, Antonio and Mellida, The Malcontent, The Revenger's Tragedy, and The Duchess of Malfi. In general Kernan's theory is as effective here as with non-dramatic satire, although I wonder about the advisability of discussing plays like Every Man Out in which the malcontent satirist is the dominant point-of-view character on the same level with plays like The Duchess of Malfi in which the malcontent is simply one of the characters.

One problem which appears throughout the book is Kernan's opposition of his own approach to satire to the "biographical approach"—the term is used pejoratively. Kernan treats the railing malcontent of Elizabethan satire as a

satiric mask and not as the true personality of the author. But, with one exception, Elizabethan satirists have not been identified with their masks by biographical critics. The exception is John Marston, whose character Kernan displays a special interest in defending. Marston has been almost universally diagnosed as a neurotic. The most elaborate statement of this diagnosis, which for some reason Kernan does not mention, is José Axelrad, *Un Malcontent Élizabéthain: John Marston* (1955), in which the following conclusion is reached:

L'écoeurement et la révolte expriment certaines caractéristiques du tempérament de Marston. Il est en effet d'humeur belliqueuse, volontiers querelleur, et semble avoir pris plaisir à donner des coups, sinon à en recevoir. Le fait est qu'il les a provoqués, en protestant à tort et à travers contre tout: les hommes, la société, l'Eglise, la Cour. Plus peut-être qu'un malcontent du type traditionnel, c'est un récalcitrant qui crie et tempête et jure, pour le seul plaisir d'exploser. (p. 307)

In fairness we should note that this view of Marston's personality is based not on simple identification of man with mask, but on consideration of his whole literary output and of certain contemporary opinions of the man. In handling one of these latter, Kernan is led to describe a character in *The Second Return from Parnassus* as "a caricature of the *literary* personality of John Marston." I feel that Kernan does injustice to his theory of satire in making it seem a mere defense of the character of John Marston.

On the whole I should say that the principal values of *The Cankered Muse* are the theory of satire it offers and the clarity with which its author, who writes very well, is able to present the generally accepted picture of Elizabethan satire.

WALTER F. STATON, JR.

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The Correspondence of André Gide and Edmund Gosse, 1904-1928. Edited by Linette Fisher Brugmans. New York: New York University Press, 1959. Pp. ix + 220. \$4.50.

Few books are more interesting than sparkling correspondence between great literary figures. This exchange of letters, regrettably, falls far short of that level. Although Gide is certainly a modern giant, Gosse has been assessed by time for what he was—a sensitive but not really acute critic of the late nineteenth century school who, somewhat vainly, enjoyed his position of power. His mind, like his work, is rather undistinguished; and this picture soon emerges from Prof. Brugmans' pages. The prerequisite of great correspondence is for both writers to have first-class minds even if both are not artists of the first magnitude. Certainly Gide never revealed his heart and mind to Gosse as he did with his correspondence to Claudel, Charles du Bos, Valéry, and even Jammes and Rilke. My impression of this correspondence is that Gide was a giant who felt quite uncomfortable talking to a man obviously not on his level.

Gide turned to Gosse in 1904 in an attempt to curry favor with a powerful

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critic who might make his fortune in England. Gide was worried, as he wrote Jammes, by the failure of Saül and Le Roi Candaule, presentation copies of which he sent Gosse. The British critic, though a Francophile, was polite but reserved in his reply; and five years of silence ensued. The turning-point of their relationship was the appearance of La Porte étroite. The Calvinistic pietism of the book deeply moved Gosse; it resuscitated memories which had caused him to write Father and Son, a biography-autobiography, which he sent Gide. The correspondence later enters a second phase, during the World War, when their letters lose their artistic interest and focus upon the political situation. The third phase, the postwar period, is the most unsatisfactory of all, though they resume their literary talk. It is in this period that Gide increasingly hides himself except in occasional outbursts of honesty. He has his reasons. Gosse is superannuated and his opinions dated and boring. This situation embarrasses Gide, who came into his own after the war. Their relationship, in short, has been transposed: Gide first turned to Gosse because he was unsuccessful in his native France and needed foreign patronage; now Gosse lionized him in an attempt, probably unconscious, to stay "young" on the literary scene. As a result the two men are rarely frank with each other except when, for example, Gosse goads him into honesty, as he did with Corydon and Si le Grain ne meurt. They are often irritated with each other-Gosse because Gide has neglected to write and send his books, Gide because Gosse continues an awkward relationship. Gosse died in 1928, cutting a correspondence which had never been deep but which had become even more painful with the years.

Prof. Brugmans is a splendid editor. She translates Gide's letters most idiomatically and gives ample background notes. Her history of the correspondence is full, and her analysis of Gosse as a critic of Gide is just and sound. Her editorial work, in short, is admirable. But despite this fact the correspondence

as a whole remains slight and rather uninteresting.

GEORGE ROSS RIDGE

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